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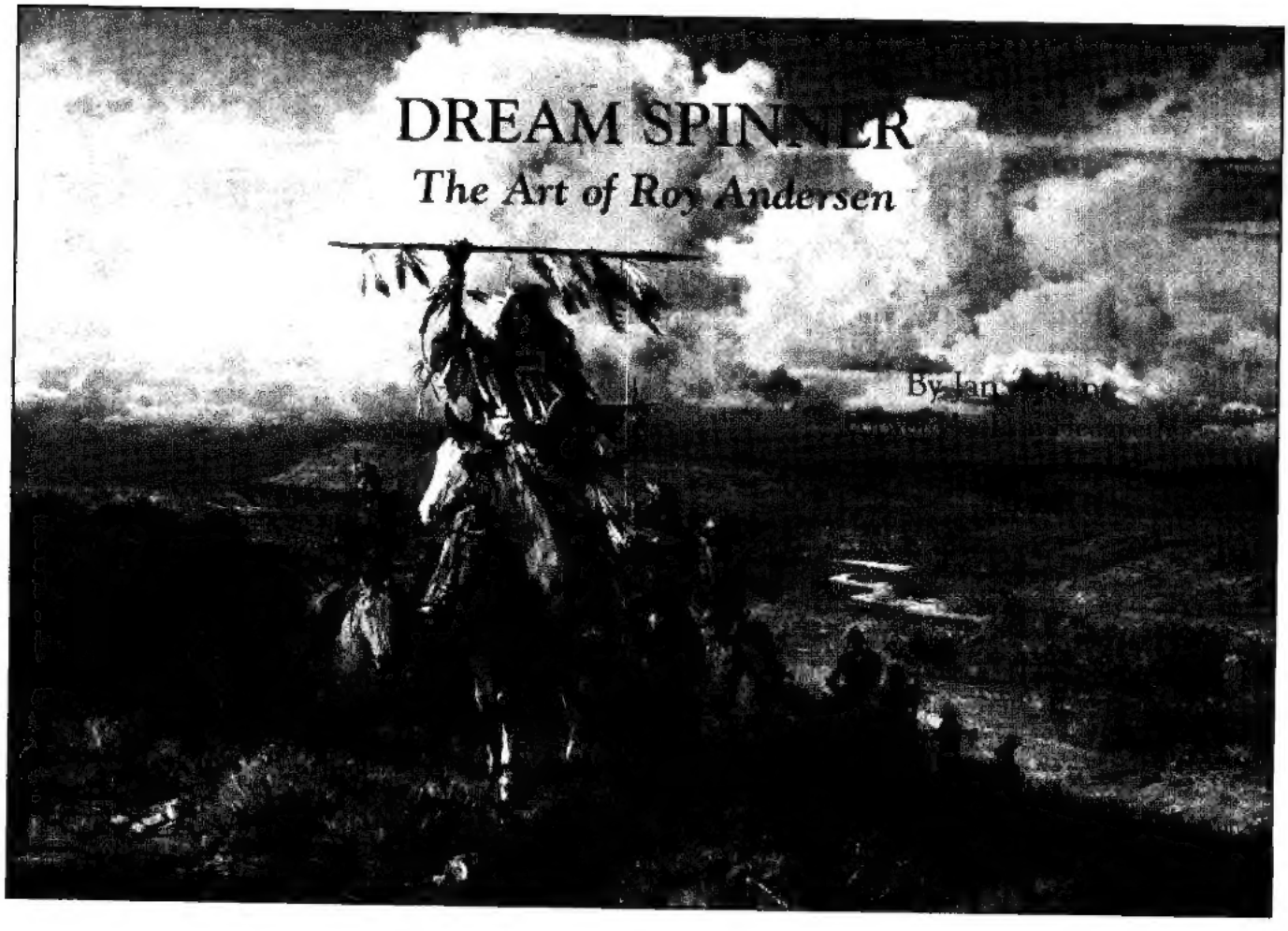

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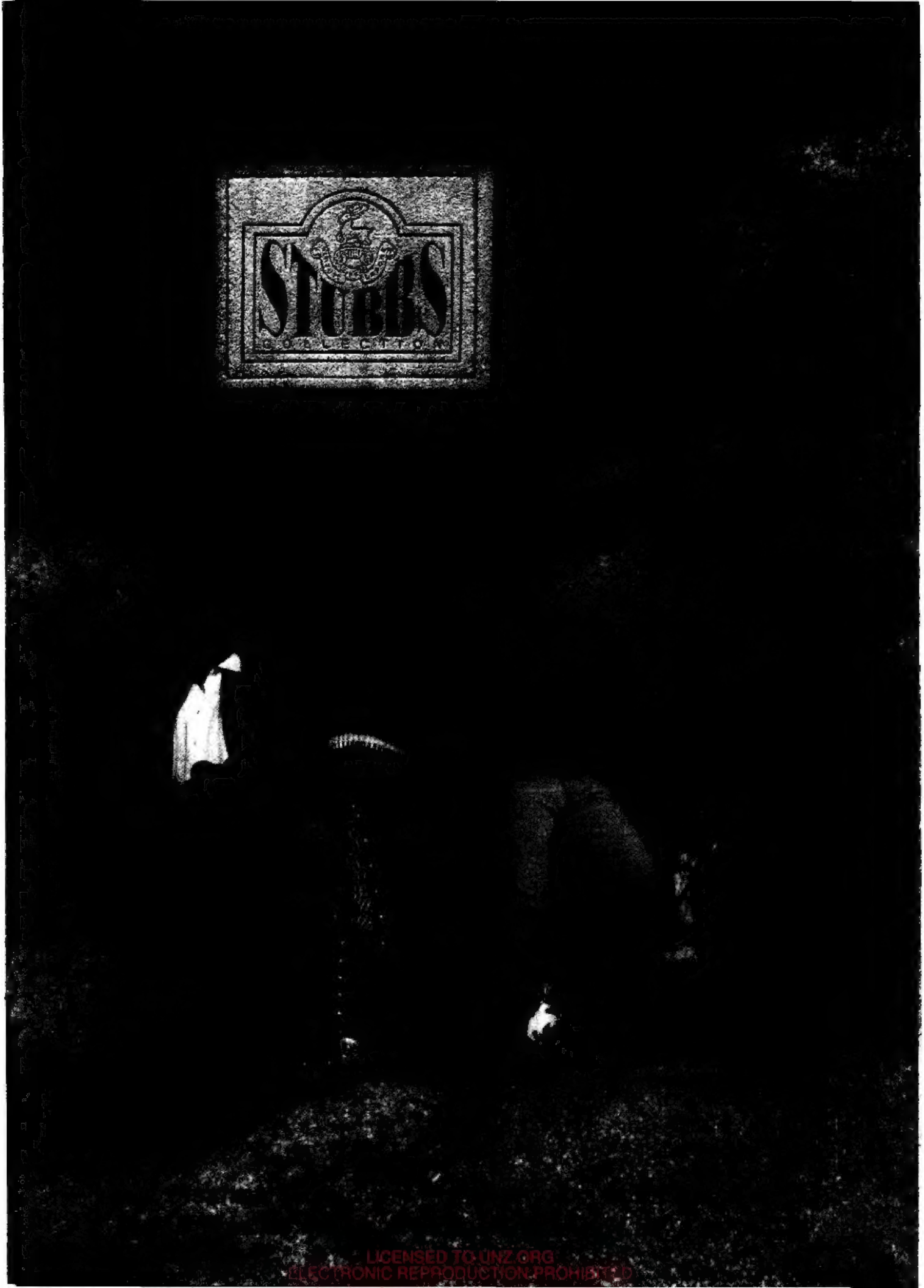

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TO THE POINT

TAMING THE BEAST

Putting this rag together month after month has always been a chore. Small staff. Small budget. Not enough time in the day.

Throwing all the pieces together on this issue was about as tough as I've seen, and I've seen a few tough months. (The time our computers crashed and I had to recreate a whole issue in one week comes to mind.)

In the last issue, we promised changes for *True West*, in moderation. A slow trek to a long-term goal of bringing this baby into the twenty-first century. This time around the track, we pulled the trigger on a new look and new paper. Simple enough.

Unfortunately, no one warned us about the headaches of working with color for the first time, managing a considerably larger staff, an office that couldn't unpack itself, a phone system straight out of Hee Haw, little sleep, fast food, an exploding toilet, and a crushing deadline.

To tell a good story, one must start at the beginning.

The day after we wrapped the January issue, I tossed our computers, all the stories and photos in our files, and a small bag of clothes into my car and headed West on I-40 Highway...Route 66...the Mother Road. Pulling into Cave Creek, Arizona, late the next afternoon, I landed at the home of Bob Boze Bell, my new boss, and your new executive editor. Bob and his family graciously agreed to let me stay in their guest room until I got on my feet, rented a place, and could bring out my own family.

Unpacking and setting up a transient *True West* office in Bob's cluttered art studio, I immediately got to work, editing stories and pulling new departments from thin air. A week later, we moved into our new home. And what a home it is.

Cave Creek is a slice of weirdness pie, but a tasty one, an acquired taste. The streets are dusty, the buildings fell straight from Cowboy Heaven, Saguaros dot the landscape, and the stars shine like spotlights. Horses, javelina, and local characters with nicknames like "Honkytonk Jack," "Mad Coyote Joe," and "Don the Naked Poet" have the right-of-way. Nestled right smack in the middle of all this western wackiness is our office.

Faced with the threat of missing a deadline and three big-rigs rumbling our way with the entire *True West* warehouse and office on board, Boze scrambled to find us a place to land. Its not a bad place. Nevermind the fact that it was once a ribs-on-the-run catering company, complete with an odd assortment of resident animal life, and a sunken, fire engine red bathtub smack dab in the middle of the bathroom floor.

Bob McCubbin, our new publisher, drove over from El Paso to check our progress. Boze and I walked out to the driveway to meet him, smiling like a couple of goofballs, proud of our new headquarters. He got out of the car, shaking his head in fatherly disgust. Taking off his sunglasses and surveying the building, he summed the place up with one word:"Clantonville."

Working an average of fourteen hours a day and skipping all but essential meals, we finally finished the issue you hold in your hands. You might notice a few new names, a few surprises, and some damn cheap book prices. We hope you have as much fun with this issue as we did making it.

Oh yeah, one more thing, we wanted to add more pages and more color, but it just wasn't in this month's budget.

Maybe next time.

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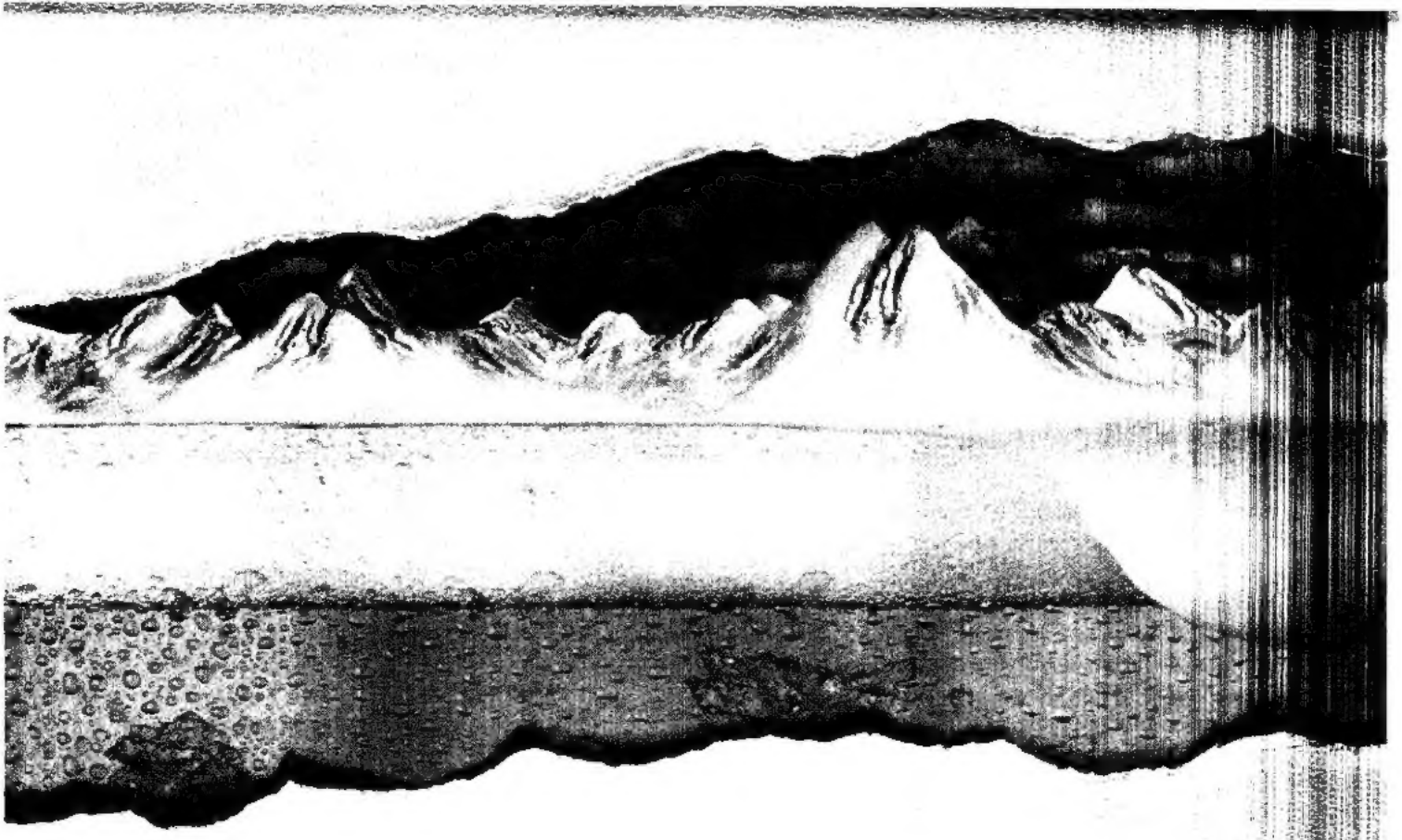

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DUCKING BULLETS

Billy the Kid shows high at Juan Patrón's

"You can lead a horse to water, but if you can get him to float on his back, you've got something."
—HARTLEY'S FIRST LAW

...On the collectors' front, a **Geronimo** photo signed by the legendary Apache war leader (soldiers at Fort Sill reportedly taught him how to sign his name) recently sold for $34,000. Meanwhile, the **Federal Bureau of Investigation** has seized a purported Geronimo headdress from a Georgia man who was attempting to sell the artifact on the Internet. **Leighton Deming** of Suwanee, Georgia, claims the eagle feather-adorned headgear has been in his family for three generations, but the FBI claims he violated federal laws protecting endangered birds by trying to sell it on for $1.25 million. The FBI is going through forfeiture proceedings to acquire the headdress as government property. Meanwhile, Deming is hoping to resolve the issue by donating the artifact to a national museum...

...researcher and author **Frederick Nolan** is hot on the trail of **Walter Noble Burns.** Evidently, for all the press Burns got from his *Saga of Billy the Kid* and *Tombstone—Iliad of the Southwest* no one could find a photo of the former Chicago sportswriter. A $100 reward offered by Nolan finally turned up a newspaper photo found by **Chuck Parsons**...

...*True West* illustrator and widely respected Alamo artist **Gary Zaboly** has been selected to head-up the Alamo Wayside Project. Devised by Alamo curator **Dr. Richard Bruce Winders** and Alamo director **Bruce Baum**, the project will utilize Zaboly's depictions of the mission, as it looked in 1836, to lead visitors from point to historical point. The displays will make their debut at the Alamo in late February of this year...

While a prisoner at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Geronimo often posed with a variety of photographic props. Ironically, the eagle-feathered headdress made popular by Hollywood is more of a Plains Indian adornment. Outside of John Wayne movies, Apaches rarely wore elaborate war bonnets.

...A recent find by historian **Drew Gomber** puts to rest a simmering feud between two historic bed & breakfasts. Both the **Ellis Store B&B** and **Casa de Patrón** of Lincoln, New Mexico, have been claiming that local legend **Billy the Kid** was incarcerated at their respective abode during the Lincoln County War. Gomber's discovery, a reimbursement request by Juan Patrón, clearly documents the Kid's twenty-seven-day stay at Casa de Patrón, along with **"Dock" Scurlock** and **Tom O'Folliard**, among others. Ironically, the request is signed by **Ben Ellis,** the son of the man who owned the store which became the Ellis Store B&B....and speaking of Lincoln, actor **Kevin Costner** flew in to Ruidoso last July and came over to Lincoln for a look. Local rumors have it that Costner wants to do a Billy movie, but at this stage of the game who can the aging actor play—**Pat Garrett, John Chisum, Godfrey Gauss**?...

...Cardsharp, magician, and medicine show man **Lafitte** has been honored by Southwest Missouri State University with an honorary degree in faro, making him "The World's Only Bonafied Doctor of Faro"....

Bucking the Tiger with the good Dr. Lafitte, Knight of the Green Cloth.

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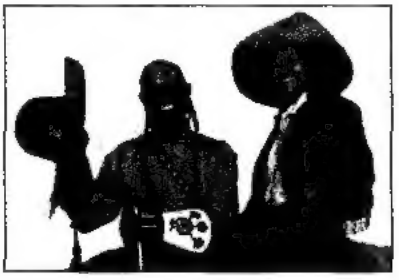
...Old West tour guides extraordinare, **Flint Carney**, and his beautiful girlfriend **DeAnne Giago** (yes, that's them in the Stubbs ad on page one), of Arizona Bound Tours, have been given the honor of being members of the Office of Indian Affairs for Indian Motorcycle Co. The venerable cycle motorworks, based out of Gilroy, California, created the honor specifically for Native Americans and there are currently twelve members. Flint is Comanche and DeAnne is Kickapoo, Pueblo, and Lakota. They will be touring the country this summer on a Six Killer 1460cc model, as representatives for Indian Motorcycles....

Flint & DeAnne, from the Bureau of Indian (motorcycle) Affairs



...Anne Meadows, author of *Digging Up Butch & Sundance* and **Dan Buck** were in southern Argentina last summer for the "*Segundo Simposio de Bandoleros en la Patagonia: Butch Cassidy y La Banda de Los Norteamericanos*." (Second Symposium of Bandits in Patagonia: **Butch Cassidy** and The Band of North Americans). It's a gathering of mainly Argentine historians interested in the early 1900s frontier history of Patagonia. Said Dan, "We could hardly refuse. The organizers waved a pair of round-trip tickets at us." Something Buck can refuse is a flood of inquires about a certain alleged Butch Cassidy reward poster. Several hopeful e-Bayers have been told by "experts" their wanted posters are worth from $10,000 to $40,000. They are not too happy when Dan tells them their heirloom is worthless (see poster at right)...

...Consumate collector **Craig Fouts**, of San Diego, has just purchased a rare **Bat Masterson** letter, written on Murphy's Exchange stationary, Denver, Colorado. In the letter, Masterson writes to Judge E.F. Colburn asking the whereabouts of **Scott Judy** (whose gun had discharged in Murphy's and hit Bat in the leg). The letter is dated October, 1886. Fouts reportedly paid $30,000 for the one-of-a-kind missive....

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Nationality, American.
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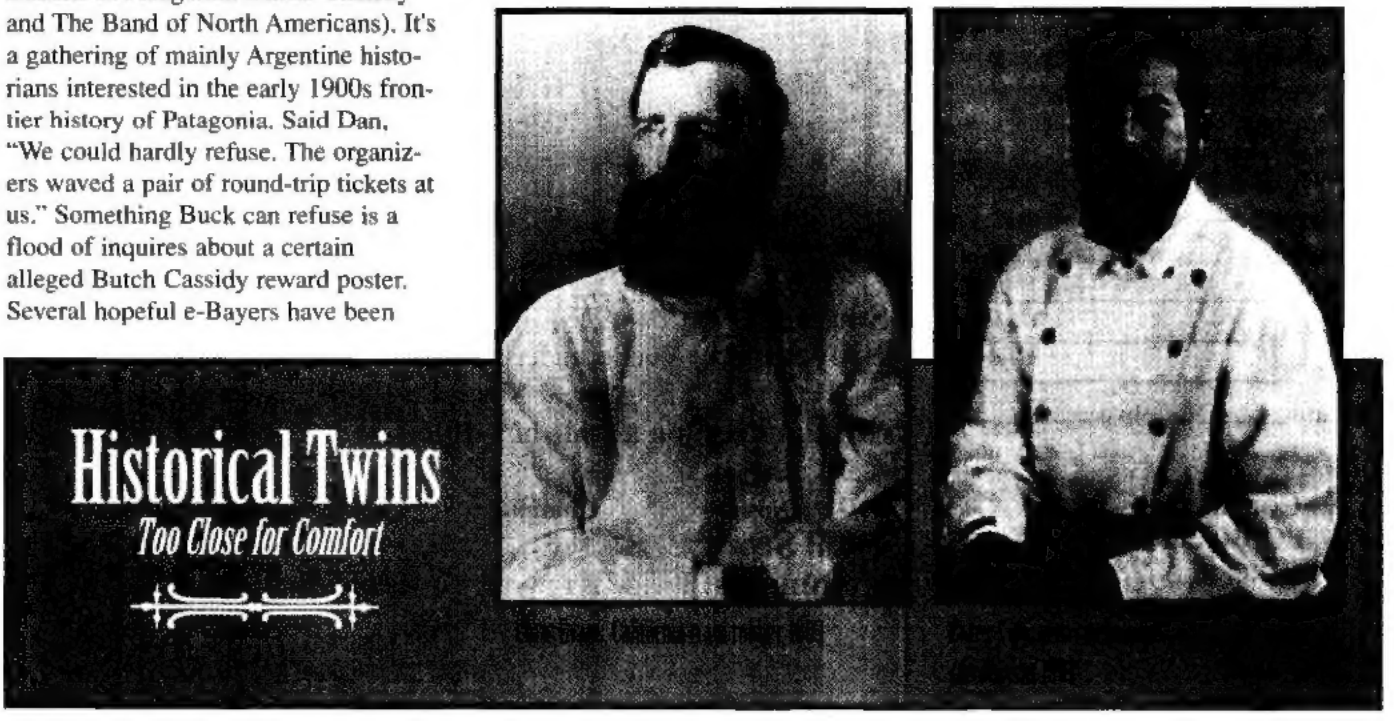
Height, 5 ft. 9 in.
Build, Medium.
Color of hair, Flaxen.
Mustache, sandy if any.
Occupation, Cowboy, Rustler.
Criminal occupation, bank robber & Highwayman cattle and horse thief.
ROBERT LEROY PARKER
ALIAS
"BUTCH" CASSIDY
Is known as a criminal principally in Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, Colorado & Nevada and has served time in Wyoming State Penitentiary at Laramie for grand larceny, but was pardoned January 19, 1896. Wanted for robbery First National Bank, WINNEMUCCA, NEVADA, September 19, 1900.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS POSTER?

There has been a spate of bogus WANTED posters on the market lately. Here is what is wrong with this one:

• The reward is too high. • The name "Robert Leroy Parker" was not known until the 1960s. Not even the Pinkertons knew his real name. • The text was lifted word-for-word from a 1904 Pinkerton poster.• The poster is printed on fake parchment paper; real WANTED flyers were printed on inexpensive pulp, for mailing.



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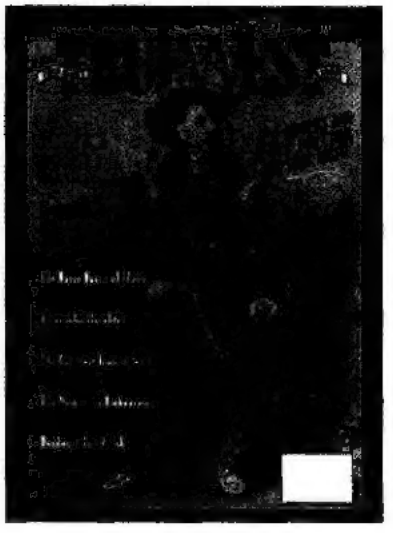

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Billy the Kid had his photograph taken once…to the best of the world's knowledge. Ever since that cold day, circa 1880, a "new" Billy photo has presented itself once every month, on average. They show up in the most unlikely of places; yard sales, antique shops, grandma's trunk, high-dollar auction blocks, online auction blocks, the engine block of a '53 Chevy Stepside. Some even find their way into the True West mailbox. So, to celebrate all of these long-lost boy outlaws, we would like to present a new department we call…

The real deal.
The one-and-only…so far.

This Month's Billy

Source: J.M. Cook, Deming, NM.
Provenance: Found under an abandoned house near Silver City, NM.
Similarities (on a scale of 1-10):

Ears: 8.5 **Eyes:** 6
Nose: 4 **Chin:** 9

Total Score: 27.5
Comments: Image is tintype; no visible identification on back.

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TRUELY WESTERN

The Twain Truth

I am sure you are aware that Samuel Clements used the pen name Mark Twain. If you had printed an article supposedly written by him, knowing he was not the author, I would be shocked. By publishing the article by Ted Ten Eyck ("The Trial of Wyatt Earp," Nov. 99), you have done the same thing.

I was led to believe that Mr. Glenn G. Boyer wrote the article, but upon telephoning him learned that he was not the author. Not that I think the article is bad, it is just shameful that you would publish this article knowing that Mr. Boyer was not the author.

Maybe you should consider changing the name of your magazine from *True West* to something else. I am not sure "true" is proper any longer.

SYDNEY HORN
LAKE CHARLES, LA.

Yes, we are aware that Glenn Boyer used the fictitious character Ted Ten Eyck in his historical novel and we also know Mark Twain's real name was Samuel Clemens (without the t). What we don't understand is, if you are a fan of both, how you could have possibly missed the obvious connection: a mock trial needed a mock author from a mock history book. Sorry you missed the humor.

SADDLE PALS By Graham Ward

A Vote For Women

I want to see more about the frontier women. What they must have gone through raising their families and holding the fort while the men were away. They had to be brave. So let's see more about them.

DOROTHY HALSEY
LOVELAND, CO.

Yes, Ma'am! Look for more coverage of brave women starting in this issue.

Succinct Ethnographic Commentary

Since Marcus Huff has become editor, the language used in *True West* has become more and more out of the range of what I think is your reading public. We old boys don't use that high-cafluttin' type of words down at the local coffee shop, at the local sales barn, nor out in the field.

I was prompted to write because of the recent book review by John Sweet (Reviews, *Indians of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming: A Winter Count*, Dec. 99). If I used those type of terms at the afore-mentioned gatherings, the old boys would never let me back in to their circle of chewing the facts and rumors of everyday life.

Please wise up your contributors to get more down to earth. I intend to continue with the subscriptions, but my dictionary is beginning to show the wear and tear.

GLENN MUELLER
SYLVAN GROVE, KANSAS

A Blast From The Past

Your story on "The Hairy Howitzer" (Dec. 99) has got to be the absolutely funniest Old West story I have seen in years. Thanks for sharing it with us.

MICHAEL LUDEMAN
NAVASOTA, TEXAS

An Officer And A Grumpy Man

As a patriotic American, retired military officer and historian, I was prompted to be slightly critical about the article on Fort Concho by David E. Crosby (Roundup, Dec. 99).

Crosby states factually that General Randall Mackenzie died in a mental hospital of syphilis. He did die in a mental hospital, but there is absolutely no evidence confirming he had the disease.

I believe Mackenize had a mental breakdown after suffering many wounds (three in the Civil War) and being under great mental stress for so many years of excellent service to his country. He even suffered a Comanche arrow in the hip during one of his campaigns out of Fort Concho, which gave him a limp in later life. Having lost some fingers during the Civil War, he received the title "Bad Hand" from his Comanche enemies.

There were other minor errors in Crosby's article, but I did not wish to see an excellent military officer's name maligned.

CLOYDE I. BROWN
FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Bear With Us

From the Moon of Tumbleweed
2nd Sun
1999 Indian Summers

It has been many winters past that I was able to subscribe to your magazine. I am excited to do so again and look forward to first issues.

BEAR WOMAN
PINE BLUFFS, WYOMING

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Custer's Hometown

By Charles M. Robinson III

The Monroe city limit sign proclaims the city as Custer's hometown, referring to him by his Union Army brevet rank, rather than his regular rank of lieutenant colonel. *Author's photo.*

Today, George Armstrong Custer is viewed as a symbol of everything wrong with the government's Indian policy. Originally honored as a fallen lion, he has since been portrayed as an egocentric at best, and a madman and murderer at worst. In Monroe, Michigan, about thirty-five miles south of Detroit, just off Interstate 75, he is remembered as the hometown boy made good—a friend, a neighbor, and a hero. Custer himself returned the admiration, calling Monroe "a most beautiful little town on the western shores of Lake Erie." So it remains more than a century and a quarter after his death, a sign at the city limits proclaims Monroe as "Home of General Custer."

Custer's presence dominates the town. The house where his wife, Elizabeth, grew up sits on a quiet residential corner, and the First Presbyterian Church, where the

Custers were married, is a downtown landmark. So is the Methodist Church where, after the disaster at the Little Bighorn, memorial services were held for the six Monroe residents who died in the fight—Custer, his brothers Tom and Boston, their brother-in-law, James Calhoun, their nephew, Autie Reed, and Captain George Yates.

George Armstrong Custer, called Armstrong or Autie by family and friends, was born in New Rumley, Ohio, the oldest child of Emmanuel Custer and Maria Ward Kirkpatrick. Both parents were widowed with children when they married and started their new family. Maria's daughter, Lydia Ann Kirkpatrick, was fourteen years older than Armstrong, and helped her mother raise the Custer children. She and young Armstrong were especially close, and she became, in the words of one early Custer biographer, "more than a sister, a second mother" to the boy. When Armstrong was ten, Lydia married David Reed, and took the boy with her to Reed's home in Monroe, so she would have a familiar face in a strange community. He remained with the Reeds until he was twelve, attending school at Stebbins Academy. Thereafter, he visited her occasionally until, at the age of fourteen, he returned permanently to Monroe. Neither the Reed house, at Fourth and Monroe Streets, nor the academy, near First and Macomb, still stands, although a descriptive map published by the Monroe County Historical Museum depicts their sites.

A year after their marriage in Monroe, Custer (left) and Libbie pose with his brother Tom (standing) for Matthew Brady. *Courtesy Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.*

By standards of the region, Monroe was already old and historic when young Custer moved there. Located on the River Raisin, it was established in 1785 as Frenchtown and, over the next quarter century, grew prosperous. Following the outbreak of the War of 1812, a British contingent of 200 Canadian militiamen and 400 Indians garrisoned the town, making it a target for an American force en route to Detroit.

The Americans attacked on January 18, 1813, drove the badly mauled Canadians and Indians into the surrounding woods, and occupied the town. The initial American force of 650 men was augmented by another 300, and went into camp on the banks of the River Raisin outside of town. On January 22, however, they were attacked by a force of some 500 British and 600 Indians. The Americans lost about 200 killed or wounded in the fight, or massacred after surrendering, and another 700 were taken prisoner. Only thirty-three are believed to have escaped. The battle is commemorated by a monument on the river.

The devastation of the war caused many local residents to flee to Detroit. When hostilities ended, they returned and began reconstructing their community. In 1817, the town was renamed in honor of President James Monroe. As county seat, the town once again grew and, besides, the sites associated with Custer, is a showcase of more than 150 years of American architectural styles.

Amid the Palladian windows, mansard roofs, and fish-scale shingles, there is nothing particularly remarkable about a two-story, white frame house with modern awnings, iron front railings, and concrete steps at 703 Cass

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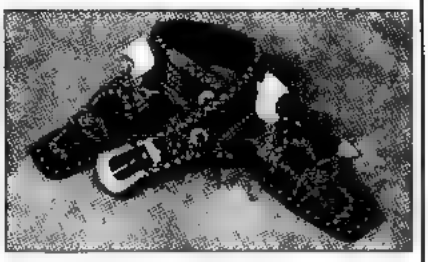
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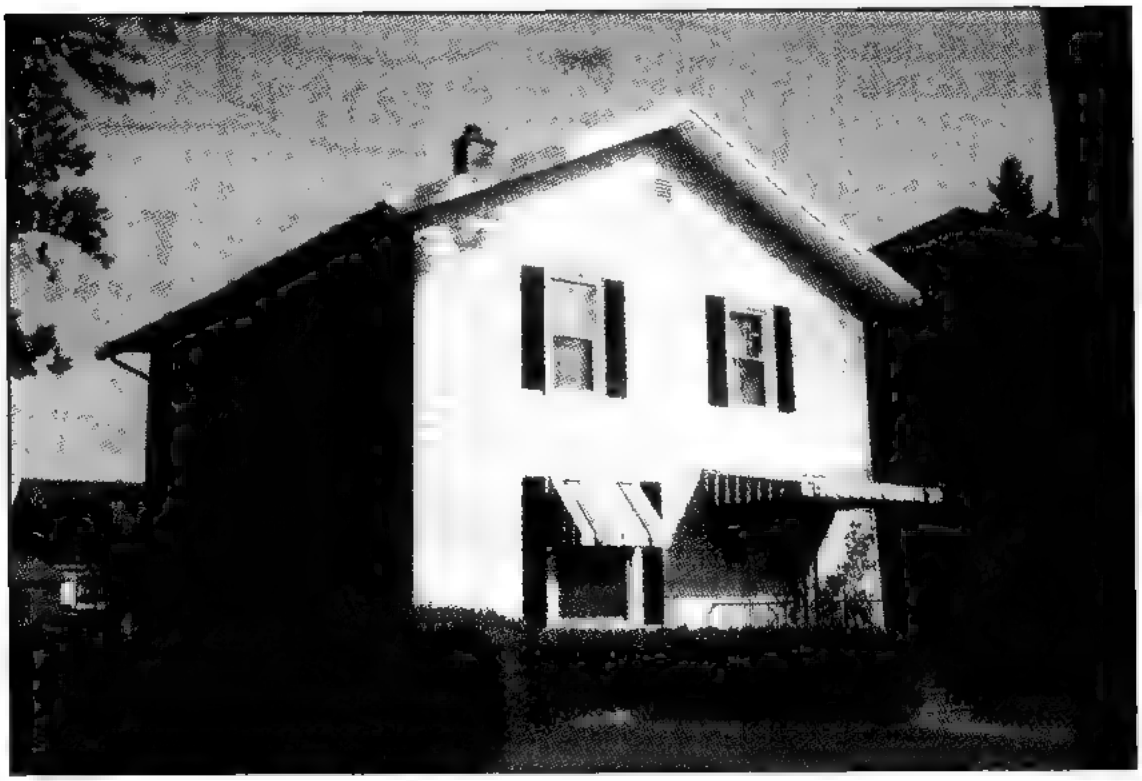
Street. Yet this was the home of Judge Daniel Bacon, father of Custer's wife, Elizabeth. Relocated to its present site in 1911, the house was originally located at 126 S. Monroe Street. Here Libbie Custer was born and here she watched in disgust as the newly commissioned Second Lieutenant Custer, whom she hardly knew at the time, staggered home drunk from an extended celebration. The realization that he could not hold liquor prompted young Custer to stop drinking, a decision he scrupulously observed for the rest of his life. So when he did become well-acquainted with Libbie a year later, her impression of him was more favorable.

Custer and Libbie were married on February 9, 1864, in the imposing First Presbyterian Church, at Washington and First Streets. Another church with ties to Custer is St. Paul's United

The Custers were members of the First Methodist Episcopal Church (now St. Paul's United Methodist Church). In 1872, Margaret Custer married James Calhoun, one of Custer's company commanders in this building. Four years later, it was the scene of memorial services for Custer, his two brothers, nephew, Calhoun, and Captain George Yates of Monroe, all killed at the Little Bighorn. *Author's photo.*



This nondescript frame house at 703 Cass St., in Monroe was the home of Judge Daniel Bacon and birthplace of Elizabeth (Libbie) Bacon Custer. Originally located at 126 S. Monroe St., the privately-owned residence was moved to its present site in 1911. *Author's photo.*

Methodist Church, at Monroe and Second Streets. At Custer's behest, his father moved the family to Monroe so that daughter Margaret could take advantage of the educational opportunities in the area. The Custers joined St. Paul's, then known at the First Methodist Episcopal Church, and Margaret married James Calhoun in this building on March 7, 1872.

In 1863, Emmanuel Custer paid $1,000 for a two-story house on the northwest corner of Cass and Third Streets which, like the Bacon House, is privately owned. It has been modernized with siding and aluminum frame windows.

The original site of the Bacon home is occupied by the Monroe County Historical Museum, which has a collection of Custer family memorabilia, along with other material pertaining to area history. West of town, on the south bank of the Raisin, at 3700 South Custer Road, the Monroe County Library System's Ellis Reference and Information Center contains a large repository of Custeriana.

Overlooking the Raisin at the southwest corner of Monroe Street and Elm Avenue is an imposing equestrian statue of Custer as a young Civil War hero. The statue was erected by the State of Michigan at a cost of $25,000.

A bronze equestrian statue of Custer was dedicated in Monroe in 1910, in ceremonies attended by Libbie and President William Howard Taft. Originally located in an intersection by the Presbyterian Church, it was moved to its present site in a park by the River Raisin in 1955. *Author's photo.*

The unveiling, on June 4, 1910, was attended by Libbie Custer and President William Howard Taft. Originally, it was in the intersection of Washington and First Streets by the Presbyterian Church, but was moved to its present location in a park by the river in 1955.

The Monroe County Historical Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., May 1 through September 30. From October 1 through April 30 it is open the same hours Wednesday through Sunday. For more information write the museum at 126 S. Monroe St., Monroe, Michigan, 48161, or call (313) 243-7137. Those desiring to visit the Custer Collection at the Ellis Reference and Information Center may contact the Custer curator at (313) 241-5277.

Western Roundup is a report on places to go and things to see associated with the history of the Old West. Submissions are welcome. To be included in our Calendar of Events, please send all information at least three months in advance. Send information, including photos to: Roundup, P.O. Box 8008, Cave Creek, AZ 85327

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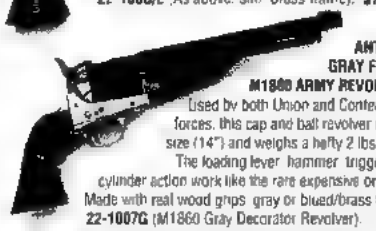

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WILD OLD DAYS

Denver's Last Hanging

By Joan Wenner

This tale is not only about murderer Theodore Meyers, the last man to be publicly hanged in the City of Denver on January 24, 1873. It is also the story of General David J. Cook, the man who investigated the crime and tracked down the culprit.(The title of "general" came from a stint in the Colorado National Guard.)

We first learn of Cook, characterized as "the greatest officer the West ever knew" through *Hands Up! Twenty Years of Detective Life on the Plains.* The engaging account of General Cook's adventurous behind a badge was originally published in 1882. It was believed to have been written by erstwhile newspaperman of the day, Thomas Fulton Dawson. The first edition was copyrighted by General Cook. The second edition included the line, "Compiled by John W. Cook," assumed to be a relative.

It is a matter of record that David J. Cook was a magnificent specimen of the western man. At six feet, three inches tall, he was portrayed as having formidable physical strength and being completely fearless. An accomplished marksman with both rifle and pistol and a splendid horseman, he was attracted to public office, running for and gaining election seven times. He did not appear to avoid the public eye, nor do accounts have him desiring to do so.

He seems to have tried most of the jobs open to a resolute young man in the early days of the Rocky Mountain West. He worked at farming, mining, supply-train running, saloonkeeping. He was an entrepreneur, police chief, marshal—and a widely known detective.

In fact, Cook gained some measure of celebrity for being the scourge of the criminal element of the West for some thirty-five years. For a good deal of that time he was the head of the Rocky Mountain Detective Association, which he founded. (The Association charged no dues and received no rewards. Any member who made a "pinch" received the bounty individually.)

General Cook's arrest record was by far his main accomplishment. One of his most publicized was that of Theodore Meyers. On the night of August 8, 1871, Meyers killed his employer on a ranch near Denver, and made an effort to murder Belle Newton, the rancher's sister, by pumping seven buckshot into her chest. Belle was not killed outright, and after a horrible night alone, she managed to make it into town. After telling her story to Cook, the lawman took to the road after the murderous Meyers.

Belle Newton was a thirty-year-old beauty living with her brother on the ranch some four miles beyond Littleton. After establishing herself in the millinery business, she became engaged, married, and later divorced. Local interest in the tragedy at the ranch was attributed to rumors that the "brother" was actually Belle's clandestine lover. Various theories circulated about the crime. One was that the ex-husband was responsible. Another was that another man had sought to establish intimate relations with the woman and that the "brother" had stepped in to curtail the relationship. Still more

rumors swirled.

The wounded Belle collapsed at the Tremont House, standing at the corner of Twelfth Street and Blake in Denver. A doctor was summoned to dress the ugly wounds wrought by the buckshot. Four passed entirely through the body, the others having lodged under the skin in the back. Miraculously, no piece of lead touched the heart. The doctor advised that Belle had one chance in a hundred of survival Despite the odds, Belle replied "that whether she lived or not, she wanted the murderer of her brother brought to justice."

David Cook, then sheriff of Arapahoe County, pieced together the story of the shooting as best he could with the wounded and shocked witness. Theodore Meyers, who had come to the ranch a few weeks earlier seeking work as a ranchhand, had been sleeping outside in an attempt to guard the grain. (A local rancher had threatened to burn the grain stacks, so the "brother" and Meyers regularly slept outside to delay a feud.) Belle was awakened by pistol reports and ran out the front door, clad only in a light undergarment. She turned to look towards the rear of the house when she was dropped by the shotgun blast. A final attempt to finish the job failed when Meyers' weapon misfired. She asked him why he had done this as he turned and bolted into the darkness, leaving Belle alone and in agony. There was no answer.

The wounded woman staggered to her bed. Catching a glimpse of herself in a large mirror illustrated the extent of her dire situation. Her garment was soaked red from her wounds. Somehow, she had the strength to get up and grab towels to wrap herself to stop the flow of blood, and a bottle of liquor. She told Cook, "And all was silent then, and I was alone through the whole wretched night." Belle dragged herself to the nearest neighbor, who then assisted her into town. Sheriff Cook promised her he would overtake the murderer, and set out on the hunt.

Cook visited the ranch searching for evidence in the company of Frank Smith. Clues found were the German Meyers' naturalization papers, listing Pueblo as the site of signing. From this

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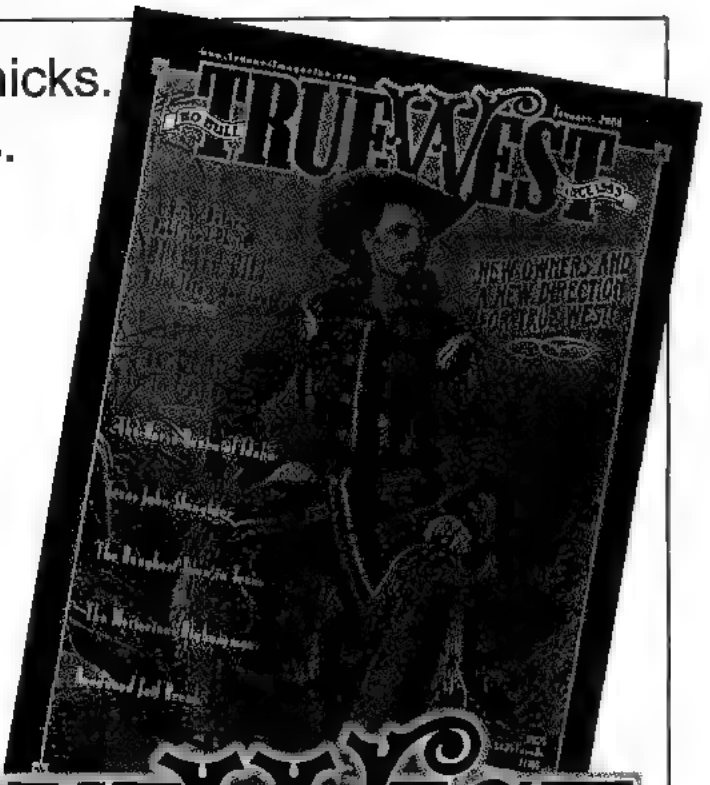

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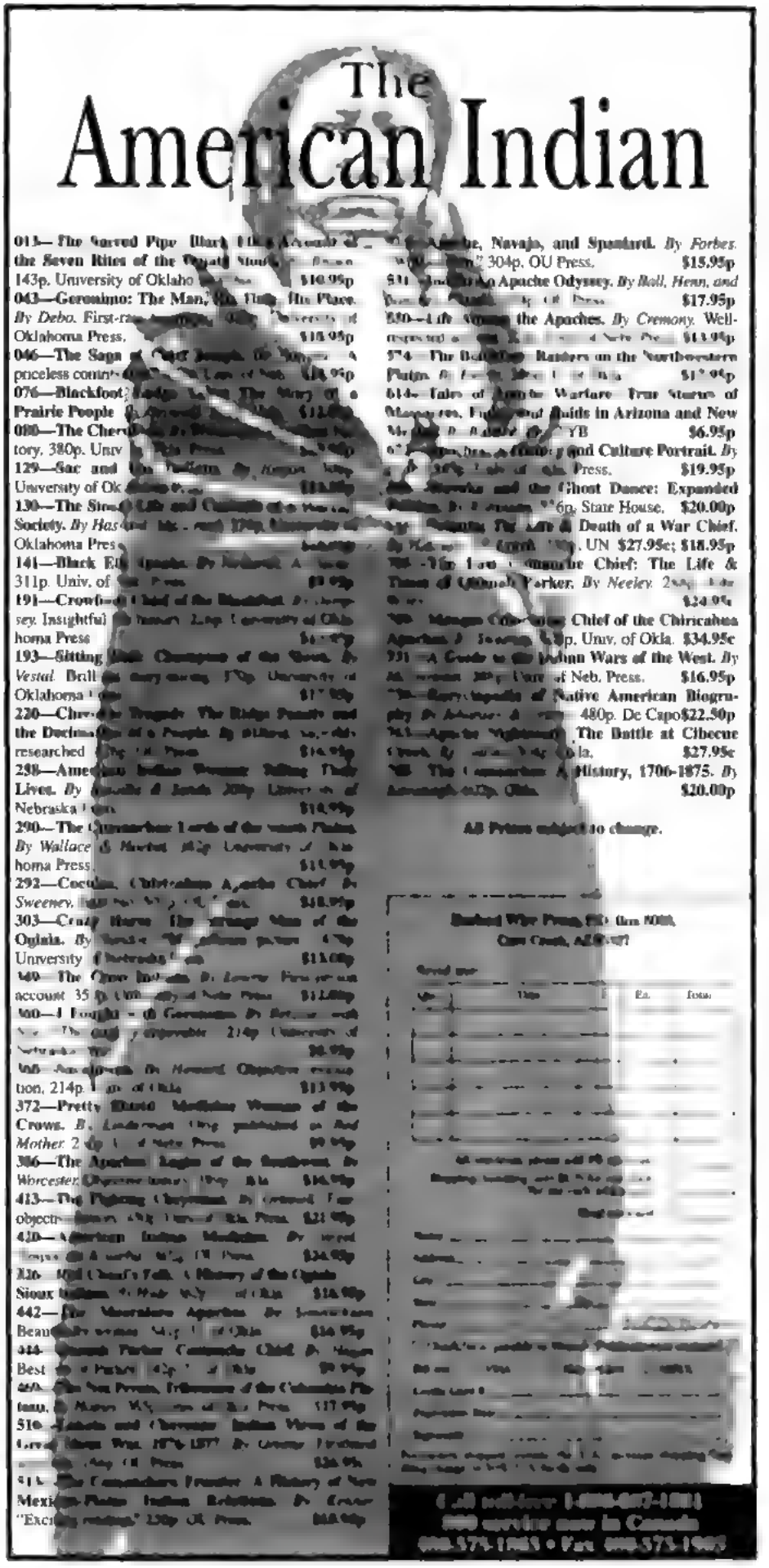

it was concluded he had resided there for some time and that he must have had friends. The body of Belle's brother was also found on the property, shot through the temple. After surveying the entire scene, Cook set out in pursuit of Meyers. He went well armed, carrying a pair of revolvers and a derringer in case Meyers made "a desperate fight."

Meyers had a day's start on him but before long Cook was hot on the trail and picking up reliable information on the course the man had taken. Several persons had seen him riding along and readily recognized him from Belle's description. Meyers was overtaken at eleven o'clock the next evening, at a place called Woodbury's, twenty-five miles north of Pueblo. Cook was prepared for a death struggle, but the capture was an easy one. Meyers was literally caught napping.

The murderer was subsequently tied with ropes, and transported by stage to a secure jail. During his incarceration, Meyers maintained an indifference to his fate. Only once was he heard to regret his deeds. On February 7, 1872, he stood his first trial. The jury returned the verdict to convict in only three hours. Meyers again had nothing to say when he was sentenced to death by hanging for his crimes. On the evening prior to his execution, however, he did make a lengthy confession to Sheriff Cook. His confession supplied many missing details of the events at the ranch. Meyers had asked the rancher to lend him $25 to go to town. After being refused the money, Meyers and his employer quarreled over the treatment of some horses. "I did not like his ways," said Meyers, and "he swore too much."

Theodore Meyers was hanged the next day—dropped through the customary trapdoor. For fact checkers, a young hoodlum named Andrew Green was hung on July 27, 1886, but he was "twitched," a different method of execution.

As for Meyers dogged pursuer, David Cook died peacefully in his rocking chair, holding hands with his wife, on April 29, 1907.

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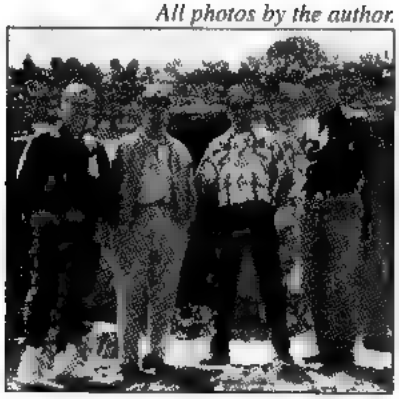
Through the Shadow

All photos by the author.



Leon Metz, George Helfrich, Jerry Crouch, and the author, at the site of Pat Garrett's rock ranch house.

Nowhere will one find a more interesting set of characters and controversial events than in the Tularosa Basin and Mesilla Valley areas of New Mexico. Bounded by El Paso, Texas, and Las Cruces, Lincoln, Socorro, Hillsboro, and other communities and ranches in New Mexico, the area is rich in violent and volatile history. In the late 1800s the region was there for the taking, and, like a magnet, it attracted strong and stubborn men who worked and fought hard. Violence and vengeance played themselves out quickly in the area, from the Lincoln County War with Billy the Kid, the resulting adventures with Pat Garrett, and the menacing politics of Colonel Albert Fountain and Albert Fall. Rancher Oliver Lee and his faithful ranch hands Jim Gilliland and Bill McNew, and local rancher turned-author Eugene Manlove Rhodes added to the drama of the valley.

The Kid was killed by Garrett. Albert Fountain and his young son Henry were murdered by persons unknown. Fall successfully defended the accused killers, Lee and Gililland. Bill McNew was never tried for the crime, but languished in the Doña Ana County jail for a year. Eventually, Garrett was murdered by a crony of Oliver Lee; and Fall was sent to prison for his part in the Teapot Dome scandal.

A view of the Tularosa Basin toward Chalk Hill. The Lee and McNew ranches are forty or more miles across the valley

Rhodes, a rancher in the San Andres mountains who befriended outlaws and vagabonds, used the experiences gained from living in this area to write popular western fiction for the *Saturday Evening Post*.

In search of the remnants of this history, a group of friends and historians, Leon Metz, Jerry Crouch, and George Helfrich, and I dusted off some good topographic maps of the area, and along with a Global Positioning System receiver, set out to pinpoint some of these significant historic sites. The locations of interest to us were Pellman well, where Albert and Henry Fountain stopped for lunch before they disappeared forever; Chalk Hill, where Fountain and his son were allegedly murdered in 1896; Wildy Well (sometimes spelled Wilde), where, in 1898, Garrett's posse tried to capture Oliver Lee and his men for the Fountain murders, only to lose one deputy in the resulting gunfight; Albert Fall's Sunol gold mine; and Pat

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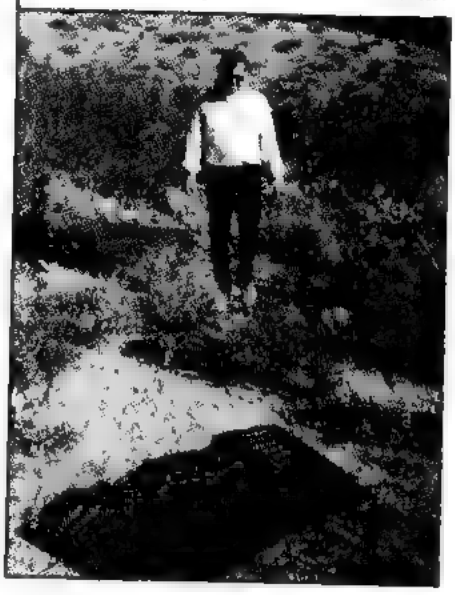
VALLEY OF THE OF DEATH

By Bruce W. Kennedy
With excerpts by
Leon C. Metz

A previously unpublished photo of Colonel Albert Fountain. *Courtesy R G McCubbin Collection*

Jerry Crouch examines the remains of an ancient vehicle adjacent to the Sunol mine.



Wildy Well, the site of a gunfight between Pat Garrett and Oliver Lee cowboys. The loss and retreat was devastating to Garrett.

Garrett's Rock House, which played prominently in his death.

From the topographic maps we scaled the latitude and longitude coordinates of the locations and stored them in the GPS memory. We then made some important contacts that would allow us to gain access to these locations. Chalk Hill, Sunol, and Rock House are inside the boundaries of White Sands Missile Range, Pellman well is in the White Sands National Monument, and Wildy Well is on the Army's McGregor Range.

Jim Eckles, the public affairs officer at White Sands Missile Range, escorted us to the Pellman Well and Chalk Hill sites. With the help of Bob Burton, the range archaeologist, we scanned infrared-enhanced aerial photographs, looking for the remnants of the old wagon trails used by early settlers. Luckily, the trails are still visible and easily discernible from the photos. The ruts cut by the wheels caught rain water and promoted growth of vegetation, which easily shows up in infrared photos 100 years later. The main wagon road between Las Cruces and the Tularosa-La Luz area is clearly visible about 100 yards south of, and parallel to, U.S. Highway 70.

In January 1896, Colonel Albert Fountain was in Lincoln, New Mexico, to secure indictments against a number of individuals for cattle rustling. Among those indicted were Oliver Lee and William McNew for defacing brands on cattle. Fountain had been warned that his life was in danger, and that he might not make it back to his home in Mesilla alive. As added insurance, his wife persuaded him to take young Henry along to Lincoln.

On Saturday, February 1, the Fountains began the last lap of their journey. They drove, generally silent, across the wide and lonesome valley toward Chalk Hill, each nursing his own thoughts about the warmth and safety of home or the silent danger that rode near them. Once the colonel looked back and saw not two men but three. The riders still made no attempt to get closer.

Toward noon Fountain stopped and talked to Santos Alvarado, the mail carrier from Las Cruces to Tularosa. Fountain expressed some concern about the riders but nevertheless pushed on to Pellman's Well, where he paused briefly to feed and water his horses. Before him loomed the long cut through Chalk Hill and beyond that the San Augustine Pass and Mesilla.

Pellman Well is located approximately one-quarter mile north of Highway 70, some twenty-five miles southwest of Alamogordo. Unfortunately, the wooden superstructure is no longer there, and the site is inside the fenced boundary of the White Sands National Monument. The area is, in government terms, "Off Limits." From that location Fountain headed southwest toward Chalk Hill, some twelve miles down the trail.

Chalk Hill isn't much of a hill, barely rising ten or fifteen feet above the surrounding terrain, but the change in elevation was enough in 1896 to hide the gunmen who murdered Albert and Henry Fountain. The wagon ruts are still there going over the top of the rise and down the other side. Our group walked along the former wagon trail for several hundred yards, which are generally filled in with mesquite bushes, greasewood, and other desert plants. Accounts of the day indicate that although Fountain was armed, he was ambushed and mortally wounded at this spot.

Leon Metz examines artifacts at Wildy Well. The remains of a ranch structure is on the ground behind him.

As Fountain trotted his horses away from the [Pellman] well, he paused to chat with Saturnino Barela, another mail carrier. Barela noticed the same three men and pleaded with Fountain to return to Luna's well and go with him to Mesilla the next morning. Fountain hesitated, considered the suggestion, and then declined. His wife expected them, and besides, little Henry had a cold. Turning his team into the icy blast whipping down from Chalk Hill, he and his son drove on—and disappeared forever.

Nothing remained to tell a complete story. The buggy tracks cutting through the small sand and brush-covered dirt hills indicated that the Fountain horses had

suddenly swerved off the road and galloped madly for nearly a hundred yards. Their pause had been a long one: scattered about were animal droppings, cigarette papers, and many hoof prints. It was clear that three men had intercepted the Fountains. Later a more thorough search of the entire scene revealed a large pool of dried blood where the buggy had stopped.

Fountain's gun was never recovered. His wagon and other personal effects were found later, about twelve miles east of Chalk Hill. The bodies were never found. Horse tracks led from the wagon's location toward Monte Carlo gap in the Jarilla Mountains and toward the McNew and Lee ranches and Wildy Well. Efforts to follow the tracks were thwarted when a herd of cattle obliterated the trail forever. Subsequent manhunts, which were centered around the belief that Oliver Lee and his friends were responsible, proved futile. Lee and Gililland eventually turned themselves in to authorities and were acquitted in a trial in Hillsboro, New Mexico, more than two years later. Bill McNew was held in jail in Las Cruces for a year, but was never brought to trial. During his incarceration, which was probably illegal, his wife gave birth to their child, but it died within days of the birth. McNew was never permitted to receive letters from his wife, so he didn't know anything about the birth or death. Chalk Hill is commemorated by a memorial marker along Highway 70 which was written by Metz with a brief description of the events of 100 years previous.

Wildy Well is on the Fort Bliss McGregor Range, just north of El Paso in southern New Mexico. Permission is required to gain access to the area because it is an active firing and maneuvering area for the Army Air Defense Artillery school at Fort Bliss, Texas, in El Paso. We contacted the Environmental Office at Fort Bliss and arranged a date and time to visit the well, which is about fifty miles north of El Paso and six miles northeast of Orogrande, New Mexico. Metz had never been to Wildy Well and eagerly accepted the invitation to go. On a cool and overcast November day our group went to the Wildy Well, guided by a Fort Bliss archaeologist and other Fort Bliss personnel. We traveled north on Highway 54 to about ten miles north of Orogrande, then headed east along a dirt road. After traveling a few miles we turned south across rough desert, and then west to the site of the well. The GPS receiver confirmed that we were in the right location. Metz had published a picture of Wildy Well in his book, *Pat Garrett*. Taken around the turn of the century, the photo shows a wooden structure with cross-members to give it strength and durability. It is still there, looking much like it did in the photograph. The corrals are still standing, and what appeared to be the collapsed remnants of an old house are near the well. There are also the remains of a stone base to what had been a water tank. As described in the Metz book, one of Garrett's deputies had taken a position on the tank to try to flush Oliver Lee from the house. It didn't work, and several bullets punctured the tank walls.

At about 4:00 a.m. on July 12 [1898] Garrett and his deputies reined in about a mile from Wildy Well and went the rest of the way on foot. Before them loomed an adobe house with an attached shed, outbuildings, a pumphouse, and a large galvanized water tank sitting on a low platform with loose dirt shoveled high around the bottom. In the corrals were horses belonging to Lee and Gililland.

Lee and Gililland had taken the high ground, shooting from the top of the house. In the brief gunfight that followed, Deputy Kent Kearney was seriously wounded.

Thus began the most humiliating episode of Garrett's life. Although outnumbering the fugitives two to one, he and his posse had been forced to surrender, lay down their arms, and walk away leaving one of their own behind.

Kearney was later transported to Alamogordo on the new railroad line, then to La Luz where he died a day later Lee and Gililland headed for the hills to avoid

Leon Metz being interviewd by a White Sands Missle Facility reporter on the significance of the wagon ruts leading toward Chalk Hill. The route was the last taken by Albert Fountain and his young son before the were murdered and disappeared.

Albert Fall's Sunol gold mine. It is suspected that the bodies of the missing Fountains were dumped in a similar mine.

Patrick Floyd Garrett gained international, everlasting fame as the man who killed Billy the Kid. His failure at positively solving the Fountain murderers blew out the candle on an already fading spotlight.

capture. The two were aided in their flight from justice by Eugene Manlove Rhodes, who owned a ranch in the San Andres Mountains about fifty miles north of Garrett's ranch. They later turned themselves in to authorities, were defended by Albert Fall, and were found not guilty in one of the most famous trials in the Southwest.

Artifacts abound in and around Wildy Well. Broken china, tin cans, and machinery parts have been left in place because of the archaeological nature of the site. Fort Bliss officials are very protective of historic locations like Wildy Well. We also found some more modern remnants from latter-day ranchers. The ranch was purchased by Malcolm McGregor, after whom the missile range is named, in the 1930s, and we found either his name or that of his son, a one time Texas state lawmaker, etched into a concrete watering tank.

Albert Fall and Albert Fountain were political enemies, Fall a Democrat and Fountain a Republican. They had fought many political battles, and there was no love lost between them. Fall owned a gold mine and stamp mill at the base of the San Andres Mountains just east of San Augustine Pass, the junction of the Organ Mountains and the San Andres, about thirty miles east of Las Cruces. There were other mines in the area, known as Gold Camp. Fall's mine was the Sunol. Gordon Owen commented in his book, *Two Alberts*, that one could see the Chalk Hill murder site from the Sunol. Others have opined that the Fountain bodies could have been easily hidden in one of the several Gold Camp mine shafts. Officially, Fall was never implicated in the murders.

With the cooperation of the White Sands Missile Range public affairs office, we were escorted to the Sunol mine to confirm Chalk Hill's visibility from that location. On a sparkling winter day we went to the mine, which coincidentally, bordered two properties later owned by Pat Garrett. Range officials knew the exact location of the mine and stamp mill. Upon arrival at the mine we used our GPS to calculate the exact bearing and distance to Chalk Hill. It was 7.5 miles due east. With 7X binoculars we could see Chalk Hill, but the terrain features were barely distinguishable. Passing traffic on the adjacent Highway 70 appeared extremely small. It is very doubtful that anybody would have seen or even noticed a two-horse buggy at that great distance. We also found the remains of Fall's house, which has been reduced to a weathered and broken slab of concrete. The remains of the stamp mill, just fifty feet north of the mine, consists only of concrete supports, which once held the large stamping machine. A windmill, rusted water pipes, the remains of an old truck fender, and a fairly recent firewall are in the vicinity of the Fall house. (One member of our group speculated that the vehicle was probably a Chevy because it had fallen apart. Another joked that it had to be a Chevy; a Ford would not be able to make it to that rather inaccessible location.)

Our group was offered a trip to Garrett's Rock House in Bear Canyon, just over the mountain north of Gold Camp. It is an historic area that few have seen because of its remote location within the boundaries of the missile range. We accepted the invitation, and arranged a visit several months later.

The trip to Garrett's ranch started at the White Sands Missile Range headquarters area and proceeded northward through a controlled access gate at an area known as the Small Missile Range. We headed north about twenty miles on a range road, then turned west toward the San Andres Mountains. Our four-wheel drive vehicle navigated the rocky and sometimes treacherous dirt road through spectacular scenery. We entered a designated wildlife area within the boundaries of the range, passed a place called Stinking Springs (not the same site where Garrett captured Billy the Kid in December 1880), then descended into Bear Canyon. After a grueling trek of what seemed like hours, we arrived at the Rock House. To their credit, the missile range administration is repairing the house to prevent it from crumbling. The site is located at the bottom of the canyon, and a small stream flows along the creek bed. The house, a two room structure, has timber roof supports laying across the walls, with straw and mud as the final protective layer. Over the 100 years of its existence, water leaking through the roof has eroded the plastered walls and deposited the sediment onto the floor. Previous occu-

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pants had thrown straw on the floor, and these layers of silt and straw are about a foot thick. The Rock House and the Bear Canyon property is important because it eventually led to Garrett's premature demise.

He had begun ranching in 1898 or early 1899 by homesteading 160 acres on the east slope of the San Andres, about seven miles from San Augustine Pass. On May 24, 1899, Garrett paid one David Wood two hundred dollars for a quit-claim deed to Sinking Springs (often called Stinking Springs) in the center of Bear Canyon, seven miles northeast of the home ranch....A small rock house and corral were included in the purchase.

Pat Garrett's son, Poe, leased the Bear Canyon property to a couple of ranchers, Wayne Brazel and A.P. Rhode, who promptly started raising goats. Pat was incensed at this move, and a long and bitter contract struggle ensued. With a possible solution in sight, Garrett traveled from his home to Las Cruces with a cattleman named Carl Adamson. It was February 28, 1908. They met Brazel on the road to Las Cruces, who would be a party to the settlement which would remove Brazel and his goats from Bear Canyon. In Alameda Arroyo, just east of Las Cruces, Garrett was shot in the back of the head after he had climbed down from the wagon to urinate.

According to them [newspaper accounts] *Adamson turned at the sound of the shots and saw Garrett fall over backward. Brazel sat on his horse, a smoking .45 in his hand. As Adamson rushed to examine the body, Brazel dismounted and handed him his weapon.*

Garrett died at the scene, and Brazel was eventually tried and acquitted, defended by Albert Fall. Albert Fall had also successfully defended Lee and Gililland for the murder of the Fountains. As a footnote, Fall was elected as the first United States senator for the new state of New Mexico in 1912. He was appointed secretary of interior in the cabinet of Warren Harding, and was eventually convicted of wrongdoing in the Teapot Dome scandal. Oliver Lee was elected to the New Mexico state legislature, and now there is a state park named after him. Bill McNew continued living on his ranch just north of Orogrande, near Monte Carlo gap. He was charged with the murder of rancher Bob Raley in 1915 and was acquitted by a jury in Alamogordo.

I look northward from my home, located on the eastern slope of the Franklin Mountains in El Paso, Texas, and on a clear day I can see across the Tularosa basin to the Jarilla Mountains. Just six miles to the northeast of the Jarillas, Lee and Garrett had their violent encounter; the Sacramento Mountains, about 100 miles away, were home to Lee's sprawling ranch holdings; Sierra Blanca Mountain, about 150 miles to the north, played host to the Mescalero Apache Indians and the Lincoln County War. The Organ Mountains, the nearby site of the Fountain murder scene, the Garrett ranch, and the Fall mining operations are within an hour or two by car.

One hundred years ago it took days by horseback or buggy to travel around the area. As the Tularosa Basin attests, when the tough way of life was mixed with true hatred among various factions, violence erupted that ended in death, destruction, misery, mystery, and unknown grief. It is also the stuff of never-ending fodder for historians and buffs alike.

Somewhere, in this vast expanse, the greatest mystery of the Southwest has been buried in two unmarked graves, waiting to be solved by a future band of explorers.

Pat Garrett's rock house near Bear Canyon, San Andres Mountians
A dispute over this property eventually resulted in the lawman's murder

Bruce Kennedy is a retired test enigneer for the United States Army, living in El Paso, Texas. This is his first article for *True West*.

BUFFALO HORN

War Chief of the Bannocks

By Hank Corless

From his hiding place among the rim rock, the mortally wounded warrior struggled to pull himself up from his blanket and into a sitting position. Oblivious to his pain and suffering, the young war chief sat cross-legged, facing into the afternoon sun, watching the last of his people disappear over a sage-covered rise on the western horizon. The silence of the parched Oregon desert was already closing in, drowning out the distant wailing of the mournful women.

Gripping the edge of a lava boulder, he took a deep breath and summoned his remaining strength in an attempt to pull himself to his feet. But the effort was too great, and he sat back again, feeling his spirit slowly draining out of his body. He didn't bother to look down where his life's blood was once again soaking through the bandages and running down the ripples of his stomach muscles, staining his buckskin breechcloth and leggings to a reddish-brown.

There was no remorse in him, no regret, only a fatal acceptance of his own mortality and the certain knowledge of his impending death. His shoulders sagged, as if weighed down by his long braids of black hair and the dangling eagle feathers. He was satisfied that he had lived his life and died as a warrior. As he began his death song he stared once again toward the west, where heat waves danced and shimmered over the far edge of the harsh landscape. The fiery sun was now only hours away from setting.

For Buffalo Horn, war chief of the Bannocks, it would not rise again.

Not much is known about the early life of Buffalo Horn, but he was born into the Bannock tribe at the end of the Indians golden age, when mounted warriors still journeyed out onto the plains to hunt buffalo. As a boy he witnessed some of the first wagon trains making their way over the Oregon Trail into the Pacific Northwest. Rising to manhood among the fierce, warlike Bannock bands that roved from the Northwest eastward into Wyoming and the Montana plains, the nomadic lifestyle and constant warfare certainly shaped his proud character. By the time he had reached warrior status his handsome, well-defined features had been chiseled into the timeless mold of the classical "red man."

In the earliest accounts by those who knew him, he was a brave and fearless fighter who commanded respect among his people. To the whites, he was known to be highly intelligent and ambitious, and like all Bannocks, "decked out in skins and plumage." At times, early writers noted, he could be both arrogant and belligerent, and sometimes contemptuous of whites. They were soon to learn that he could also be a very formidable foe.

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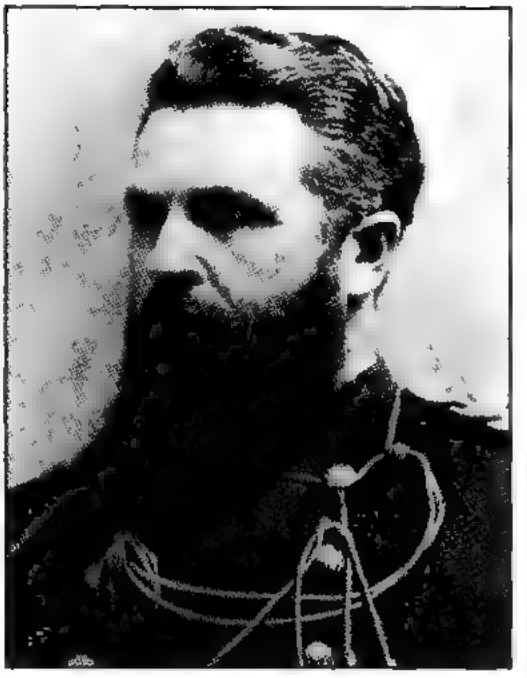
The arrival of white settlers into southern Idaho in 1863, brought about the eventual removal of the roving bands of Shoshone and Bannock Indians onto a permanent reservation. Buffalo Horn was still a young man when the Treaty of 1868 was signed. The Bannocks, under the leadership of Chief Taghee, had demanded and received the Portneuf country around the old Hudson's Bay Trading Post of Fort Hall. They also demanded the Camas Prairie of south central Idaho, where for centuries their people had dug Camas roots, a main staple of their diet. The Bannocks, along with their Shoshoni allies, moved to the new reservation in 1869.

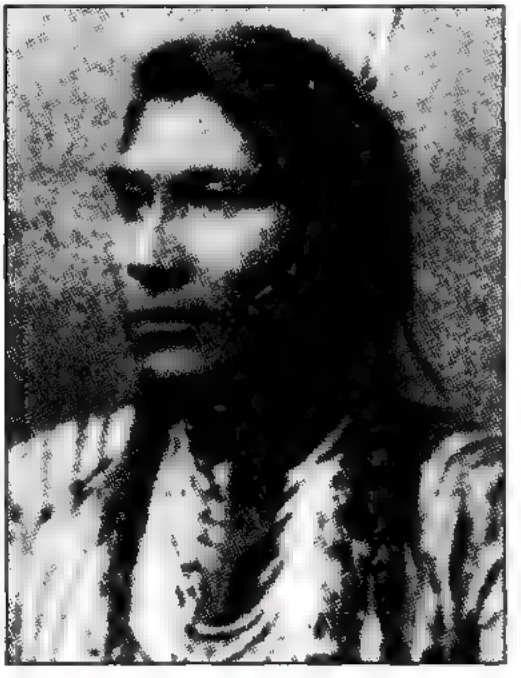


Captain Reuben F. Bernard was unsuccessful in his attempt to cut off Buffalo Horn and engage the war chief in a decisive battle. *Courtesy Idaho State Historical Society*

A clerical error, it was learned later, gave them "Kansas Prairie" instead of Camas Prairie. This mistake would set the stage for war when white men used the error to their advantage to encroach on the camas grounds. The government did nothing to correct the volatile error.

Like most of the Bannock warriors, Buffalo Horn quickly grew tired of the reservation. He missed the old lifestyle and freedom to roam the countryside at will. His people had followed a seasonal round for centuries, consisting of hunting and fishing, or visiting their old Umatilla, Cayuse, and Paiute friends in Oregon. Worse than the loss of personal freedom was the starvation subsistence provided by the government agents.

Buffalo Horn's rise in tribal leadership began with the recognition by his people that he was a superior warrior. This reputation and his exploits did not go unnoticed by the United States Army, who in 1876 enlisted him as a scout to track down the Sioux for General George Crook. He quickly demonstrated his bravery by volunteering to take a message from the Powder River, across enemy territory, and deliver it to General Nelson Miles on the Yellowstone. He and a Crow scout were accompanied on the dangerous mission by William F. Cody, later to gain international fame as Buffalo Bill. While serving with General Miles later that year, Buffalo Horn fought courageously in a number of battles with the Cheyenne.



Buffalo Horn served as a scout, chasing Chief Joseph's exodus to Canada, before himself turning on the United States Army. *Courtesy Idaho State Historical Society*

The following year he again volunteered for service with General O.O. Howard when Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce began their long trek out of Idaho in an attempt to reach Sitting Bull and the safety of Canada. This time, he was appointed leader of the Indian scouts. Several times during the campaign, Howard noted the "good conduct" of "this trusted Indian" leader in his official reports.

Buffalo Horn also had a tendency for testing his bounds. After the Battle of the Big Hole, he and his Bannocks dug up the bodies of some of the Nez Perce in order to get their scalps, raising the ire of General Howard. On another occasion he asked the general for permission to hold a war dance with the Indian scouts, a request that was granted. Later that night he wanted to kill three of the general's Nez Perce scouts, accusing them of secretly sending information to Chief Joseph, a charge the three vehemently denied. When the general refused to go along with him, Howard noted in a report that Buffalo Horn "was very angry" about it.

Buffalo Horn grew disgusted with Howard's command. The resentment only deepened when one morning soon afterwards Chief Joseph's Nez Perce, using one of Army's own cavalry formations, attacked Howard's camp and succeeded in driving off 250 head of horses, including many belonging to the scouts. Buffalo Horn wanted to go in immediate pursuit, but after a brief skirmish Howard broke off the engagement and returned to camp. The final insult at the end of the war, and one that angered Buffalo Horn and his scouts the most, was being given stale tobacco in lieu of their promised pay.

Following the Nez Perce War, Buffalo Horn and the Bannock scouts returned to the Fort Hall Reservation. Although life there had always been bad, he found the situation had deteriorated considerably. Many of the Indians had grown restless, or been forced to leave the reservation to search for food. As one Indian put it, it was "two days eat, five days no eat." Further, the reservation agent was blamed for showing favoritism to the Shoshones, and for giving them more food than was given to the Bannocks

On a more positive side, Buffalo Horn found his position within the tribal hierarchy had been raised. He

Oliver Purdy (left) and Charles Steuder were both killed when they engaged Buffalo Horn's Bannocks at South Mountain. *Courtesy Idaho State Historical Society*

was now elevated in stature, almost as an equal with Chief Tendoy, and over such leaders as Pocatello and Shoshoni chief Captain Jim, both of whom had fallen out of favor. The younger warriors and the more warlike element of the tribe held Buffalo Horn in high esteem. Not one to shirk his duty, he accepted the responsibilities of leadership proudly.

More troubles developed when several shooting incidents involving the Bannocks occurred in late 1877. A warrior shot and wounded two white teamsters who were passing the agency. Soon after, another Indian shot and killed a white man who was delivering cattle to the reservation. Both Bannocks were eventually arrested, but not before soldiers were dispatched to the reservation. In retaliation against Indian protests the soldiers seized thirty-two guns and over 300 of their horses. The horses were eventually returned, but the incident only deepened discontent among the Bannocks.

By early spring, 1878, food was once again at a minimum at the Fort Hall agency. The situation was so critical that the agent had no choice but to encourage the Indians to hunt outside the reservation. The local whites were outraged. There had been rumors of a possible war, and many were building fortifications in case the Indians went on the warpath. At the beginning of May, word reached Boise City that over 200 of the malcontents were at Payne's Ferry on the Snake River, and that Buffalo Horn was having a hard time controlling the "saucy" Indians. Shortly afterward, the Bannocks left for Camas Prairie and Buffalo Horn headed to Boise City for a visit.

His arrival in the capital did not go unnoticed by the editor of the *Idaho Statesman,* who used the occasion to reflect on the chief's service during the Nez Perce War. "Whatever were the shortcomings of the other Indian scouts, Buffalo Horn always stood bravely and faithfully to his duty and never failed to give perfect satisfaction," the newspaper noted.

Buffalo Horn used the occasion to visit Territorial Governor Mason Brayman. After a cordial visit, the governor gave him permission to buy two dollars worth of ammunition for deer hunting and issued the chief a travel pass to visit the Umatilla Reservation in Oregon, acts the governor was later criticized for. Reports had been rolling in from Indian agents throughout Nevada, southern Idaho, and eastern Oregon during the spring of 1878, reporting that Bannock emissaries were traveling throughout the region, stirring up unrest among the tribes. The Bannocks were seeking allies for a possible war that would drive the white men from their country. There is little doubt that Buffalo Horn was behind much of the war talk.

Several weeks later, Buffalo Horn rejoined his Bannocks at Camas Prairie, ninety miles east of Boise City, where the Indians were gathering camas. Shoshones from Fort Hall were there, along with Chief Tendoy's Lemhi band. Once again white men were there, grazing several thousand cattle and a number of horses. Over the past several years the Indians had repeatedly complained to the authorities about white encroachment on Camas Prairie and nothing had been done about it. This time, there were also a large number of hogs rooting in the camas fields.

Bannock patience was at an end. Buffalo Horn rode down and confronted the white men, and angrily ordered them off the prairie.

About that same time word of a possible Indian outbreak reached Boise City from a man named James Dempsey, who was married to a Bannock woman and was then at Camas Prairie with the Indians. He urged the governor to "come at once" and talk with Buffalo Horn, as the Bannocks were "in concert" with the Umatilla and Malheur Indians and an uprising was imminent. Brayman didn't go, but instead wrote a letter to General Howard, commander of the Department of the Columbia, requesting that the company of cavalry stationed at Fort Boise be dispatched to Camas Prairie as a "show of force."

At Camas Prairie, things were already out of hand. Three of the white herders hadn't moved fast enough. On May 30, two Bannock warriors, Joe, the son of Chief Bannock John, and Weegant, of the Ross Fork Agency, visited the herders' camp. In the shoot-out that followed, Lew Kensler and George Nesby were seriously wounded, along with one of the Indians. Kensler and Nesby, together with William Silvey, ran to their horses and escaped.

Around the council fire that night, the talk turned to war. Buffalo Horn argued that since they would be held accountable anyway, and would be severely punished, they might as well "start in" and go on the warpath. Tendoy, along with most of his people, was zealously opposed to war and decided to return to the Lemhi agency. The Shoshoni were also against

war and decided to return to Fort Hall, along with a few of the Bannocks.

Buffalo Horn and almost two hundred warriors remained steadfast, and painted their faces for war. Buffalo Horn already knew that if they could reach Juniper Lake in southeastern Oregon, they would find a large gathering of Indians who were also contemplating hostilities against the whites. Suspecting Dempsey of treachery, the Bannocks went to his camp and killed him. Then they began rounding up Silvey's horses, killing cattle and drying the beef, and making preparations for their exodus.

Buffalo Horn's military experience would prove invaluable. He knew the army would be in quick pursuit, trying to cut off any escape routes, and his force was not large enough to make a stand. Like the Nez Perce before them, the Bannocks would have to flee the area as soon as possible. He decided to raid local ranches and settlements along the way to get what horses and supplies they needed, then head west, across the rugged desert towards Steens Mountain in southeastern Oregon. Once there, they would call a war council with Winnemucca's Paiutes, Chief Egan's Malheurs, and other unhappy tribes to gain reinforcements.

The Bannocks, known as brave and fearless allies to the United States Army while serving as scouts, also proved the could be formidable foes. *Courtesy Idaho State Historical Society*

The military at Fort Boise was already taking to the field. Captain R.F. Bernard, a seasoned veteran of the Indian Wars, along with the sixty men of Company G, First Cavalry, were en route to Camas Prairie the same night the herders had been attacked. The Infantry was right behind him. At Rattlesnake Station, fifty miles east of Boise City, Orlando "Rube" Robbins and his experienced Nez Perce War scouts reinforced the detachment. On June 2, they made first contact with the Bannocks rear guards, who quickly abandoned their position and faded into a lava field.

Buffalo Horn and his war party moved fast. Heading for the Snake River, they raided King Hill Station and then descended on Glenns Ferry, both having been hastily deserted by the whites. Crossing the Snake River, the Bannocks cut the ferry loose behind them before heading down the opposite bank for the Bruneau River Valley. Almost immediately, they came upon a hastily abandoned train of freight wagons loaded with goods for Boise City merchants. They helped themselves to what supplies they needed and burned the rest.

John Bascom and two other white men were not as lucky as the freighters. Riding in a wagon drawn by two horses, they were easily overtaken and the three men were quickly killed. Abandoned homesteads and ranches were stripped and burned. Two lagging settlers named Sweeney and Hays were also put to death.

The settlers of Bruneau Valley were not caught off guard, however. Warned in advance by an Indian named Bruneau John, they had taken refuge at a ranch, ten miles up the valley, where they had previously built a fortification in anticipation of such an outbreak. Still, the settlers were forced to watch helplessly as the Bannock raiders pillaged and burned their way up the valley, driving over six hundred horses before them.

When Buffalo Horn led his force up the Bruneau Valley, his trail indicated that the Bannocks were heading south toward Duck Valley and the Juniper Mountains. He soon swung west and entered the rugged hill country of the high desert. His plan, evidently, was to skirt around the southern boundary of the mining camps located around Silver City to the northwest, then break out into the vast desert of Oregon on a more direct route towards Steens Mountain.

In the meantime, Captain Bernard managed to swim his force across the Snake River and reach the Bruneau Valley on June 6. The captain immediately sent Robbins and his scouts out to locate and follow Buffalo Horn's trail, while he evacuated the Bruneau Valley settlers.

Bernard was not fooled by the Indians trail to the south. It was also evident that Buffalo Horn had no intention yet of engaging the military in open battle. The Indian camps they found had been hastily abandoned and the Bannocks were traveling great distances between halts. Instead, experience told him Buffalo Horn might be found near the rugged Juniper Mountain to the west and about thirty miles south of Silver City. If the latest rumors of a general uprising that would include the Malheur and Paiute Indians were correct, Buffalo Horn would continue his drive toward Oregon.

On June 8, Robbins' scouts reported back that the Bannock force was located on Battle Creek, just about where Bernard guessed they would find them. Pushing his troops as quickly as he could, the column moved out to engage Buffalo Horn in a single, decisive battle.

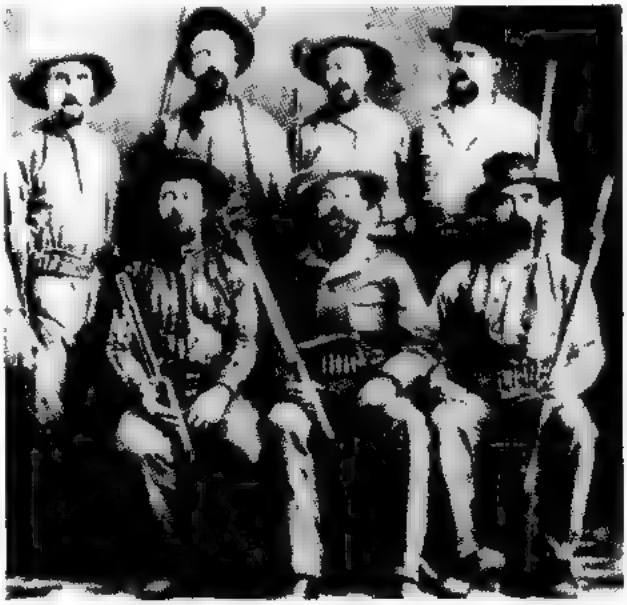
Bernard had no way of knowing, however, that another force already coming down from the north would foil that plan.

When news of Buffalo Horn's raid on Bruneau Valley reached the townspeople of Silver City, fifty miles to the northwest, they prepared to defend themselves in the mine tunnels if the Indians came their way. A company of mounted and well-armed civilian volunteers was also quickly assem-

bled. On June 2, twenty-six men under the leadership of "Captain" J.B. Harper rode to the "front" in an attempt to head off the marauders before they commenced raiding the mining settlements around Silver City. A number of prominent locals made up the small force, including Charles Steuder, a Swiss immigrant and a partner in the Blue Gulch Mine, and Oliver H. Purdy, the county treasurer and school principal. A trusted Indian, Paiute Joe, served as scout.

The volunteers had no way of knowing that the movement of their force had not gone unnoticed by Buffalo Horn. On the evening of June 7, one of the chief's scouts had returned with the news of the approaching volunteers and a war party was already moving to intercept them.

Early the next morning the eager volunteers were in the saddle again, heading over the top and down the southern slope of South Mountain. The men were full of threats and determination. A few of them had perceived scores to settle or were seeking vengeance against predatory Indians in general, but most were just filled with a sense of duty.



"Rube" Robbins, front row center, and his scouts were among the first to give chase and track Buffalo Horn's war party. *Courtesy Idaho State Historical Society*

At noon, Harper's volunteers and Buffalo Horn's force of sixty warriors ran headlong into each other on an open flat at the base of South Mountain. It was here that the bravery of Buffalo Horn couldn't be disputed. He immediately spread out his warriors in a skirmish line and took his place in front. Then, using the cavalry tactics he had learned from previous military campaigns, he screamed out a war cry and charged. The line of warriors, smeared in war paint and stripped to loincloths, surged forward into a full gallop.

The roar of rifles, pounding hooves, and war cries broke the quiet of the surrounding hills while a white cloud of gunsmoke choked the still air. Seeing the charging Indians and realizing they were outnumbered, the resolve of the volunteers quickly faded. They immediately broke ranks, wheeled about, and fled.

In the running battle that followed, the retreat of the volunteers turned into a complete rout. Steuder was shot dead and fell from his saddle while the panicky mounts of the whites threw at least three or four others, including a fatally wounded Oliver Purdy. Returning fire as best they could, the volunteers scrambled for the safety of the higher ground on South Mountain. Buffalo Horn clearly held the upper hand and pressed the attack, not giving the whites time to regroup.

Paiute Joe is credited with saving the retreating volunteers from total annihilation. As the Indian force closed in, he looked back to see Buffalo Horn and his warriors already overtaking the stragglers in the rear. Realizing he had no chance of escape, the scout pulled his mount to a stop and leaped from the saddle, keeping the horse between himself and the oncoming attackers. Then, swinging his rifle over the saddle, he fired off a shot at close range, toppling Buffalo Horn from his horse and sending the war chief sprawling into the brush. Finding themselves without their leader, the Indians suddenly quit the chase. Paiute Joe, seeing his chance, remounted and made good his escape.

The wounding of Buffalo Horn was enough for the otherwise victorious war party, and they broke off the attack. The white scalps were paraded triumphantly through the camp, but it was soon obvious that Buffalo Horn's wound was far more serious than they had at first thought. Under his direction, they hastily broke camp and headed west into Oregon.

The outbreak at Camas Prairie and Buffalo Horn's subsequent raid across southwestern Idaho Territory set in motion an Indian war that would put the Northwest frontier in flames. But Buffalo Horn would not be present to lead his people in the war that he started. Three days after his victory at South Mountain, the mortally wounded leader could no longer keep up with the war party. The dying war chief asked that he be left behind. His followers, reluctantly, granted his request.

The Bannocks moved on to Steens Mountain in Oregon, where they met with the Paiutes and Malheurs, taking the warpath under Chief Egan. Warriors from a number of tribes, including elements of the Klamaths and Umatillas, eventually joined them, raising the ranks of this great federation of Indians into the thousands. It was only after a number of engagements and at great cost of life to both sides that the Bannock War of 1878 was finally brought to an end.

William J. McConnell, a senator, Indian agent, and governor of Idaho, blamed the cause of the Bannock uprising on those whose duty it was to protect the Indians claim to the camas fields. He wrote, "...when they discovered their harvest being destroyed by the white man's hogs, forbearance ceased to be a virtue, and they appealed to the only arbiter they knew, the God of Battle. The writer, being one of the first trespassers on Camas Prairie, must admit that the Indians under their code of morals and government, had ample justification for the methods they pursued."

Unfortunately, this admission of disregard for Indian treaty rights came far too late for Buffalo Horn and his Bannocks.

Hank Corless is the author of *The Weiser Indians*, and has written for *True West* since 1986. He is currently reading *Lonesome Dove*, "...again."

Deep along the unforgiving pines their search for gold ends in a pitched fight and sudden death. The grim faced warriors move about the fallen prospectors in stony silence, save for one. A young brave stares skyward, a bloody scalp raised high above his head, an offering to the Great Spirit for the sins of the white man.

This narrative comes to mind when viewing the drawing, "Fever for Gold" by noted western illustrator Al Martin Napoletano. The piece is brought to life in the ink-dry medium and the end result is a richly detailed, vivid depiction of cultures clashing in the West. A variety of mediums are used effectively by the artist—tempera, pen-wash, scratchboard, and pen and ink, with an affinity for the latter. This versatility is also reflected in his wide range of subject matter and interpretation of events that ring authentic. Whether the scene is an overland stage thundering into Tuscon or the courtroom dramatics of a frontier lawyer, Napoletano has incorporated various aspects of the western experience for over fifty years. A dark, foreboding landscape is an underlying theme in many of his pieces. Ominous canyons and narrow gorges hold unexpected danger around every turn. No other artist displays the tenuous relationship between man and the land better than Napoletano. It is for this reason that his work stands apart.

Napoletano was born in 1920, and raised in San Francisco's North Beach area. This bustling community, situated near the waterfront, provided early inspiration for a young boy with artistic talent. Napoletano fondly remembers weekly visits by the local junkman in his horse-drawn cart and the old American Express Company, which was still using horse and wagons. His fascination with horses expanded into cowboys and Indians, which he illustrated for elementary school classmates.

In 1943 his first published work, a comic strip titled "The Ranch Boys," appeared in *Western Horseman* magazine. "Nap," as he became known, worked as a machinist in the shipping industry to make a living, but his passion for illustrating the Old West never wavered.

A long relationship with *True West* magazine began in 1954. The founding force behind *True West*, Joe Small,

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THE WESTERN ILLUSTRATIONS OF AL MARTIN NAPOLETANO

summed up Napoletano's commitment to his craft and sheer staying power in 1979. In the introduction to the book, *The Western Illustrations of Al Martin Napoletano*, Small stated, "At this writing we have published 155 issues of *True West*, 121 issues of *Frontier Times* and 61 issues of *Old West*. One or more Napoletano illustrations have appeared in virtually every one of them with never a hint of monotony...." This remarkable body of work has spanned six decades, and Nap's artistry continues.

Al Napoletano recently discussed his interest in the Old West, and how the field of western illustration has changed since he began over a half century ago.

True West: How old were you when you first began drawing?

Napoletano: I remember in grade school I did a crayon drawing of an eagle that was hung on the bulletin board in the corridor of the school, when I was either six or seven years old.

TW: What spurred your initial interest in depicting the Old West?

Nap: I was raised in a large city (San Francisco) that still had horse drawn wagons on the streets. The fact that I lived close to several old barns that held a few wagons—and not far away a good size lot with horses—this must have caught my fancy to all things western.

TW: How did western artist Charles Russell influence your work?

Nap: Charlie Russell was a master genius in the field of western art. I believe not only me, but all western artists were greatly influenced by Russell's work. He focused on the landscape as opposed to Frederic Remington, who concentrated more on the men and horses in his paintings and drawings—the background was secondary to him. Russell portrayed the western landscape the way it was and that is what made him great. In my opinion three of the best who portrayed the Old West were Charlie Russell, Nick Eggenhofer, and Remington.

TW: A variety of mediums, such as tempera and pen-wash, have been used in your illustrations. Which one is your preference and why?

Nap: The majority of my illustrations were pen and ink, drybrush, washdrawing, and opaque. Pen and ink—with the ink used as the foundation in the drawing —was the medium, I had the most success in having my work published. If I had my choice and had made my living in the arts [Al retired as shop foreman for the shipping industry in 1982] I would have painted in oil. My oil paintings have been displayed in galleries over the years.

TW: What do you think of the current crop of western illustrators working in the field?

Nap: There are not many western magazines on the racks today that still call upon a artist to illustrate the stories they publish. Most of the western artists today have gone to easel painting and producing covers for paperback westerns. I would say of the current illustrators used by western magazines that Gary Zaboly is the best of the bunch. He is a good illustrator who is very versatile with his drawings and cover paintings.

TW: Has the style or the application of your work changed over the years?

Nap: I've always done my drawings on a large scale in the past. This allowed plenty of time to do research work before starting the illustration. Today, when I submit my work for publication, the format or size is 8" x 14" [to conform to digital scanning]. This is somewhat confining as an artist, and when coupled with a deadline, it has certainly changed the application of my work.

Chris Roberts interviewed Larry McMurtry in our January issue. He is currently researching the life of Crazy Horse.

PROHIBITE

The Saga of
WALTER NO

Ask someone, anyone in the English speaking world, and maybe even beyond, to name a popular figure of the Old American West. The chances are very good that somewhere in the top five or six they'll name Billy the Kid or Wyatt Earp. Ask someone of Hispanic origin to name a Spanish-speaking western legend, and there is an excellent chance they'll name Joaquin Murrieta.

Besides the amount of ink which has been used on these three legends—and a quick glance at my admittedly incomplete library shows nearly one hundred volumes devoted all or mostly to Billy, Wyatt, and Joaquin—they all have one thing in common: we probably know their names today because of one man, a Chicago journalist named Walter Noble Burns.

Burns is the most influential non-fiction writer in Old West history, and the most recent reprinting of his three most popular books, *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, *Tombstone—An Iliad of the Southwest*, and his Joaquin Murrieta story, *The Robin Hood of El Dorado*, all from the University of New Mexico Press, should underline that fact. There are those who would dispute his claim to being a "non-fiction" writer, so heavily laden is his work with legend and anecdote. Very well, then. Call Walter Noble Burns the most important myth-maker of the Old West. Call him what you will, our perception of the West, filtered through countless paperbacks, movies, and television shows, would be a great deal different if not for him. And yet, Walter Noble Burns the man is still mostly a blank page in western history.

By Allen Barra

BLE BURNS

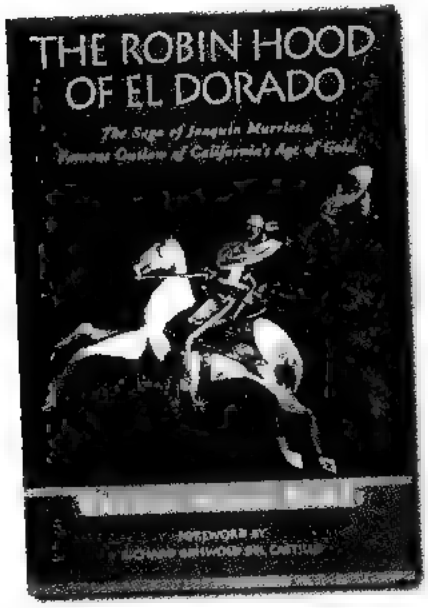
There is a reliable biography of Buffalo Bill's "creator" Ned Buntline, and we know more than we probably need to know about Wyatt Earp's first biographer, Stuart Lake. But about Burns, who was at least as important as either, we know almost nothing.

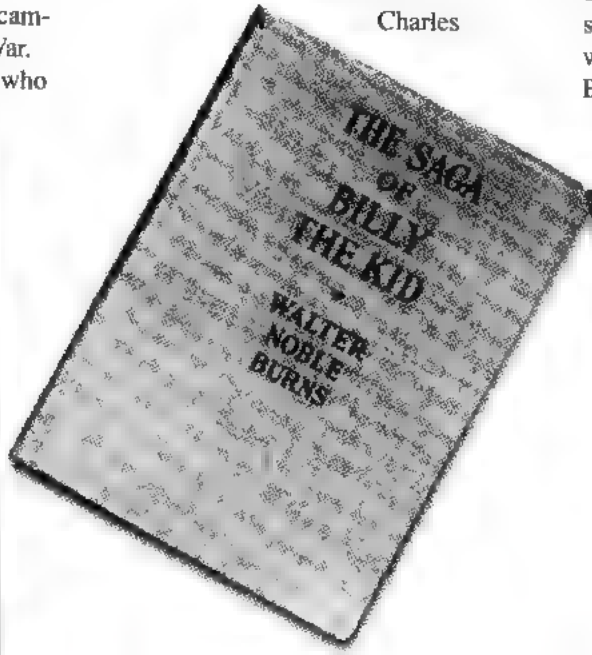
The bare facts, which can be found in the obits of papers he wrote for, most notably the *Chicago Tribune*, are that he was born in 1872 in the town of Lebanon, Kentucky. He got his first job in journalism there at age eighteen (a fragment of a letter indicates his family couldn't afford to send him to college). He went to sea at a young age, with a whaling ship out of San Francisco. Why he waited till age forty to gather the material for his first book, *A Year with a Whaler*, we do not know. He later served a stint with the Kentucky infantry during the Puerto Rican campaign of the Spanish-American War.

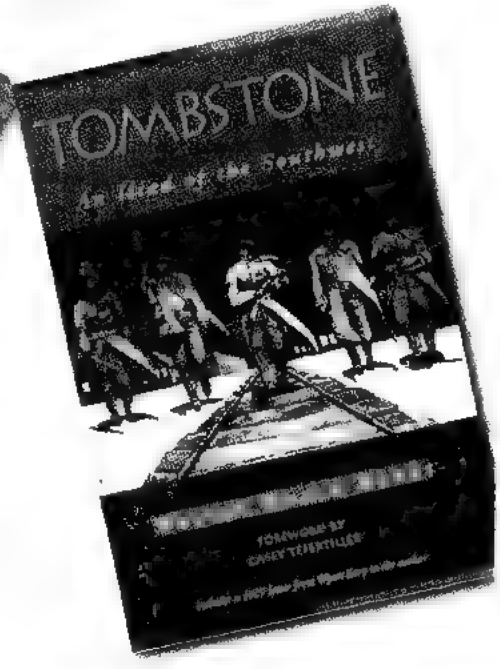
Sometime around 1910—those who gathered information for his obituaries placed the time after 1905 and before World War I—Burns went to Chicago and made his bid to enter big league journalism (apparently he had spent some time with the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, *Kansas City Times*, *Denver Republic*, and *San Francisco Examiner*, but the dates are uncertain). While writing for the Chicago *Tribune*, he got the plum assignment of following General "Black Jack" Pershing's troops into Mexico in their famed but fruitless search for Pancho Villa

Evidently, he made an impression on his colleagues: his obit in the *Chicago Tribune* suggests that he lent his name to the character of Walter Burns, the cynical editor in "The Front Page," the great newspaper play by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur.

If nothing else, the months Burns spent covering Pershing's movements gave him a taste of the Southwest, which he evidently enjoyed. But the period after the expedition seems to have been an indecisive one, as he quit journalism and took a job with Vanderhoot & Company, a Chicago advertising agency. Finding himself close to fifty—an age when many professional men back then saw retirement only a few years away—Burns suddenly took off for the Southwest to write a book. What stirred him to re-launch his career as a book writer we'll never know, but he undoubtedly gathered numerous tales and stories of the Spanish southwest while crisscrossing the Mexican border. Also, Burns, as he acknowledged in his later writings, got some inspiration from a hack magazine writer named Frederick R. Bechdolt.







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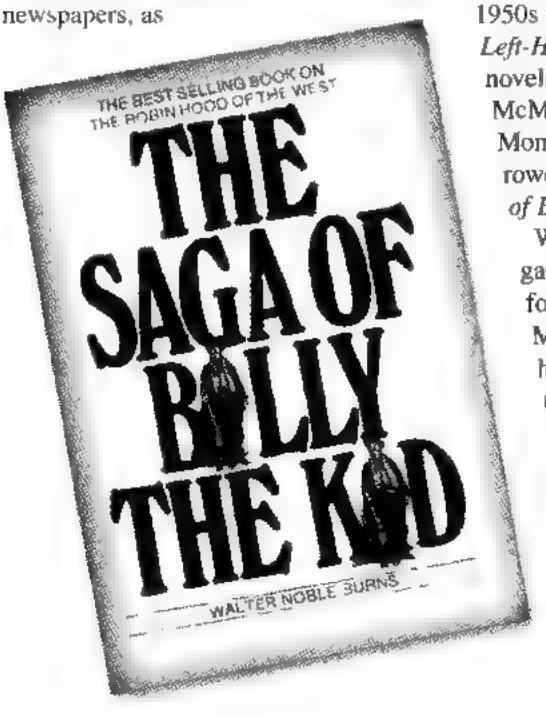
Bechdolt had written a series of magazine articles on dimly remembered southwest legends, among them Joaquin Murrieta, Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, "Texas" John Slaughter, and Billy the Kid. The pieces appeared in book form in 1922 under the title *When the West Was Young*. Though it is forgotten today, Bechdolt's florid mix of facts, legends, and stories is one of the seminal books on the Old West, as it helped revive the names of some very colorful characters who were in danger of fading into obscurity. Another is that it gave Walter Noble Burns an outline from which to finish inflating their legends.

Because he was so famous in the year following his death, and because he is a household name today, it's difficult to realize that in the 1920s Billy the Kid was in danger of fading away. In 1925 Harvey Fergonson, writing in H.L. Mencken's *American Mercury* magazine, began an essay with the words "Who remembers Billy the Kid?" Many, of course, still did, but in the two decades or so since the death of the dime novel his fame had dimmed. During prohibition, flamboyant bootleggers and gunmen, many sharing Billy's Irish blood, had become popular public figures. A revival of the archetype was inevitable, and Burns got the bandwagon rolling.

Relocating to the Southwest, Burns researched original records and newspapers, as well as collecting invaluable folk tales from old timers. In 1925, *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, became the biggest selling and most influential western book of all time. Including a Barnes & Noble imprint in the early 1990s, it has seldom been out of print. The book's impact on American culture has been enormous. In 1932, it provided the basis for the first Billy the Kid movie, *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, directed by King Vidor and starring University of Alabama football star Johnny Mack Brown. Since then, Billy, or characters named for or inspired by Billy, have appeared in well over one hundred A- and B-list films, and so many TV shows that no one can easily name them all.

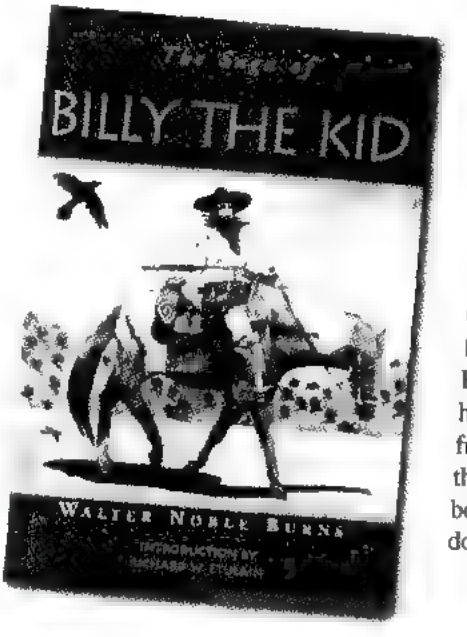
In New York, Aaron Copeland, a young composer from Billy's reputed hometown of Brooklyn, caught the romance in Burns' book and eventually wrote perhaps the most famous piece of American "Cowboy" orchestrated music, "The Billy the Kid Ballet Suite." In the 1960s, a young Canadian poet and novelist named Michael Ondaatge, later to become famous for his novel *The English Patient*, thrilled to Billy's adventures in Burns' book and in the pages of the Charlton Comic, *The Adventures of Billy the Kid*. Ondaatge's one-volume poem, *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* was published in 1970. Gore Vidal plumbed Burns for material for his 1950s television play *The Left-Handed Gun*, and novelists from Larry McMurtry to M. Scott Momaday have borrowed from *The Saga of Billy the Kid*.



While Burns was gathering material for Billy in New Mexico he must have also been thinking about a follow up book. We have a letter Wyatt Earp wrote to him in March 1927, indicating that Burns had approached him somewhat earlier about a book on Doc Holliday. In fact, Burns wanted to do a biography of Wyatt but was turned down because Earp was trying to sell his story (with help from cowboy film star William S. Hart) as written by a family friend named John Flood. (Ironically, Earp, like Burns, had been inspired to get his story written after reading Bechdolt's work.)

Wyatt was furious over what he regarded as a misrepresentation of the Tombstone story, and first attempted a refutation to Bechdolt with Forrestine Hooker, daughter-in-law of Arizona rancher Henry Hooker. Surely Bechdolt was one of the writers Earp was referring to when he told Burns that "There had been so many lies written about me, in so many magazines in the last few years that [it] makes a man feel like fighting." No one is sure why the Hooker project was abandoned.

In his letter to Burns, Wyatt wrote that "I know you mean to do the right thing by me, but I would ask of you to say as little as possible about me." The result, *Tombstone—An Iliad of the Southwest*, greatly displeased Earp. The aged lawman felt that Burns had betrayed him and stolen the thunder from his own proposed autobiography. In the manner of his namesake in "The Front Page," Walter Burns was unscrupulous about how he got his information. Still, a reread of the book today suggests that Earp may have been a little too touchy. Wyatt is only one of the many characters brought to life for the first time by Burns; in fact, he is absent from the last third of the book, a section dominated by



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Texas John Slaughter. But Earp, "the Lion of Tombstone," as Burns dubbed him, stands out most vividly. And, as it would turn out later with Stuart Lake's *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal*, Burns most assuredly did not steal Wyatt's thunder.

Burns' whereabouts over the next few years are difficult to track. *The Chicago Tribune* obituary had him living in San Antonio, Texas, until about six months before his death on April 16, 1932, when he apparently moved back to Chicago. He must have been making trips back to Chicago from Texas because just before his death in 1932, *The One Way Ride* was published. The book was about Jake Lingle, a corrupt Chicago newspaperman who became entangled with the Al Capone mob and was eventually murdered. It sold well, and chapters from it survived in true crime anthologies published right up until the 1950s.

Burns' last book was *The Robin Hood of El Dorado*, published around the time he died. It was eventually made into a feature film starring Warner Baxter. Burns had no qualms about taking an earlier book about Murrieta, a book by a transplanted Cherokee Indian named John Rollin Ridge (a.k.a. "Yellow Bird," his Cherokee name). Ridge emigrated to California from Oklahoma in the early 1850s and gathered together many of the tales and stories surrounding a Mexican bandit named Joaquin Murrieta (or Murrietta or Murieta, depending upon which story you heard).

Joaquin Murrieta, a member of a band of Mexican highwaymen, gained everlasting fame for having his head severed by the California Rangers. The infamous "Head of Joaquin" was displayed in San Francisco for nearly sixty years. That didn't stop Ridge from embellishing Joaquin's story with his own past adventures. Nor did it stop Burns from taking Ridge's story and embellishing it even more (though, to be fair, Burns may well have begun to gather stories and information about Joaquin when he worked for the *San Francisco Examiner*).

Whatever the fictional content of *The Robin Hood of El Dorado*, and there's no doubt that it contains a higher per-

Authors on Burns:

Frederick W. Nolan

The Influence of Walter Burns:

Frederick Nolan: I would not class Burns as an influence as much as an inspiration. Reading his *Saga of Billy the Kid* fired me with the desire to know more.
William Secrest: He never really inspired me, other than stirring up a great interest in Joaquin Murrieta. I think I first discovered his work in the 1940s, during high school.
Steve Gatto: Burns' account of the Tombstone saga provided me with an early interest in Tombstone…his books have inspired many people to look deeper into the facts and circumstances of this period.
Nolan: I can only offer the unproven proposition that many, many of those who have written about Billy the Kid have come to the subject if not directly from Burns, then noticeably influenced by him…in my case he was the direct cause of my doing so.

The Credibility of Walter Burns:

Secrest: He would mix all kinds of undocumented material into his books, fashioning his work into preconceived scenarios.
Nolan: The simple fact is that Burns was unable to separate fact from fiction, and so included both in his works. He freely and shamelessly invented dialogue…lending his work an authenticity entirely spurious.
Gatto: …many of the old timer recollections are not supported by contemporary evidence. Many researchers and writers (myself included) have used Burns' writings without properly noting that the accounts should be used with caution….
Secrest: Burns work is, really, a series of well-written, undocumented pot boilers!

The Legacy of Walter Burns:

Gatto: Burns' work have been of great benefit, because they helped bring the history of the Old West, and characters like Wyatt Earp and Billy the Kid, back to life. They were mainly folkloric tales, based largely on the recollections of people who had first-hand knowledge of the events….
Secrest: Undoubtedly, just the fact that he had the foresight to seize the subjects and thrust them into immortality, literally, is a major contribution.
Nolan: To paraphrase Hemingway, "he started it all." Before Burns was a wilderness. His work was the "wave" that spawned a library full of non-fiction books about the American West. Of course, we now know he fell for "the legend" every time, but the subtle difference is that he KNEW he was falling for legend, and went right along because it made a better story.

Frederick W. Nolan is the author of *The West of Billy the Kid, John Henry Tunstall*, and *The Lincoln County War*
William B. Secrest is the author of *I Buried Hickok, Dangerous Trails*, and *Lawmen & Desperadoes*
Steve Gatto is the author of *Wyatt Earp. A Biography of a Western Lawman*, and *John Ringo. The Reputation of a Deadly Gunman.*

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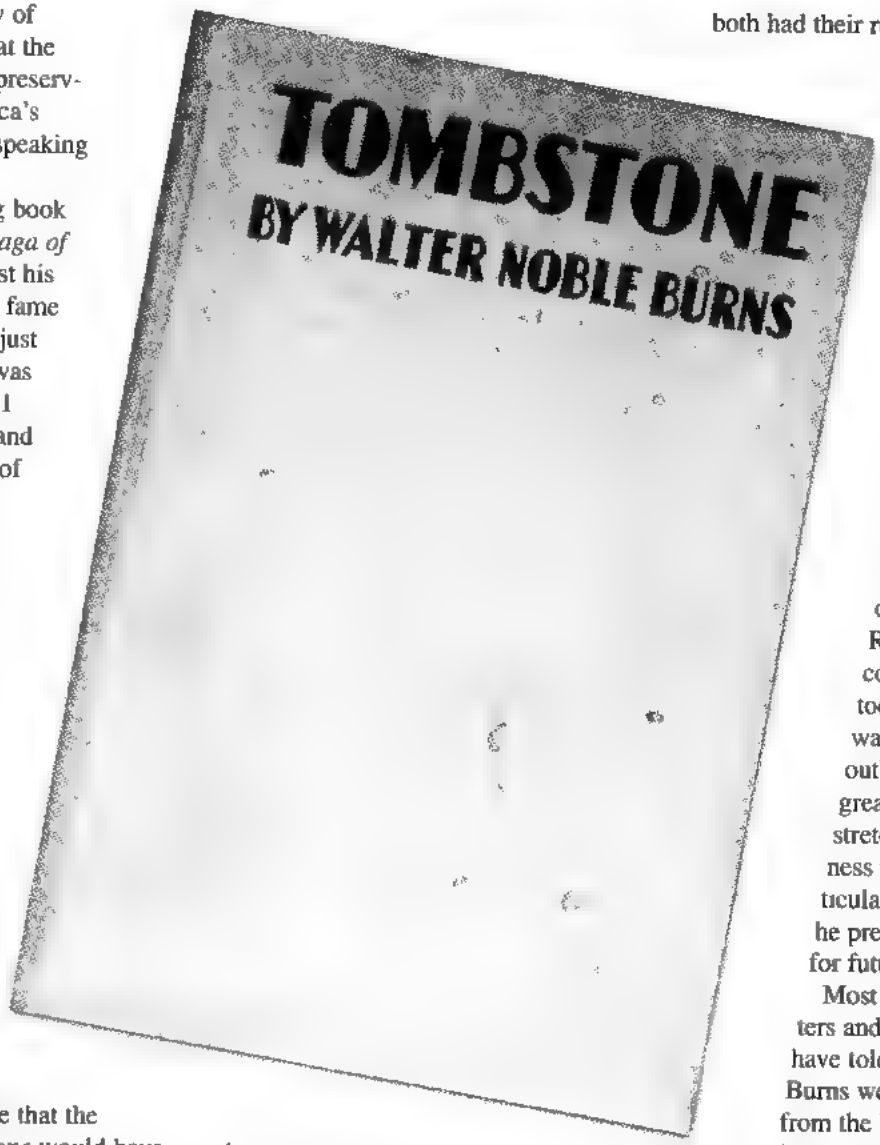
"You have to take Burns in the context of his own time and place, not ours. You have to understand what he was doing as a writer and why he was doing it. No man but a blockhead ever wrote for anything but money—and money was the name of Burn's game. It's my belief he made an honest effort in the Saga, in Tombstone, and in Robin Hood, to get the facts, but he weas no historian...he could only be what he was, a "romantic" writer who fell in love with his subject ...."—Frederick Nolan

cent of fiction than any of Burns' other books, it at the least had the effect of preserving the name of America's most famous Spanish-speaking outlaw.

Burns' most enduring book has proved to be *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, but he lost his chance for true literary fame when he died in 1932, just as Wyatt Earp's stock was about to boom. By 1931 prohibition had ended and Americans were tiring of outlaw stories. Editorialists were calling for lawmen who could handle the Al Capones and Dutch Schultzs "like Wild Bill Hickok and Wyatt Earp would have." Stuart Lake smoothed the rough edges off Earp, scrubbed him clean, and presented him as a symbol of American frontier law.



Lake won the Earp sweepstakes. Had Burns lived, it's possible that the rich material in *Tombstone* would have been reprinted and embraced by Hollywood, as Lake's *Frontier Marshal* was. But Burns' legacy survives in the enduring interest in Billy the Kid, and in the success of the 1994 movie *Tombstone*, which mined Burns' book heavily. (*Tombstone* screenwriter Kevin Jarre admits to lifting several colorful details from Burns, including Doc Holliday's much-quoted lines "You're a daisy if you do," and "I'm your huckleberry.") The film also helped revive Burns' conception of Earp as a complex, sharp edged human being. "No halo," Burns wrote, "is for this rugged storm-beaten head. He was a hard man among hard men and a hard environment."

Burns' main contribution to the history of the West was in seeing its characters as part of an American mythology. It was no accident he used classical allusions in his work: Tombstone was indeed an "Iliad" of the Southwest.

The death of Curly Bill Brocious brought "the Heroic" age of Tombstone to an end. Burns was entirely non-judgemental about the legends he wrote about. Billy the Kid was no villain and Pat Garrett not simply a hero; both had their roles to play in the birth of a legend. He sided with neither the Americans or the Mexicans in Joaquin Murrieta's California; it mattered to him only that some people needed to see Joaquin as a Robin Hood figure. He was as fascinated by his outlaws as by his lawmen; Wyatt was "the Lion of Tombstone"; John Ringo, who would be completely forgotten today if not for Burns, was "a Hamlet among outlaws." Burns wasn't a great writer by any stretch, but he saw greatness in the men of a particular time and place, and he preserved their greatness for future generations.

Most of the personal letters and papers that would have told us more about Burns were long ago stolen from the University of Arizona. Earp fanatics. Who knows what important notes those letters held.

Walter Noble Burns himself is probably lost to us forever, but his Billy, Wyatt, and Joaquin are with us to stay.

Allen Barra is the author of *Inventing Wyatt Earp*, and a frequent contributor to the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Sports Illustrated*.

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The Pushroot Rangers

By Jean A Mathisen
With illustrations by
Gary Zaboly & Bob Boze Bell

As word of the deaths of George Armstrong Custer and his 200 men reached the small settlements scattered across Wyoming and Montana, some settlers felt it was necessary to take action on their own part to provide protection for themselves and their families. The newly christened community and post office of Lander, Wyoming Territory, was no exception. On July 9, 1876, the "Wyoming" or "Pushroot" Rangers militia was formed.

Led by Captain William O'Neal, the highest ranks of Pushroot Rangers included Hank Garlitz as first lieutenant and Hiram "Hi" Mealman of North Fork as second lieutenant. As United States Army Captain William C. Bangs duly noted in a letter to Territorial Governor John M. Thayer, "The object in view is to effect an organization which can be relied upon for home protection in case of Indian invasion...." The muster roll contained the names of some of the most prominent men in the area, although men were few and far between to begin with. Included among these was John "By Cripes" Curry, who had taken up land along one of the several small creeks that ran across the town site.

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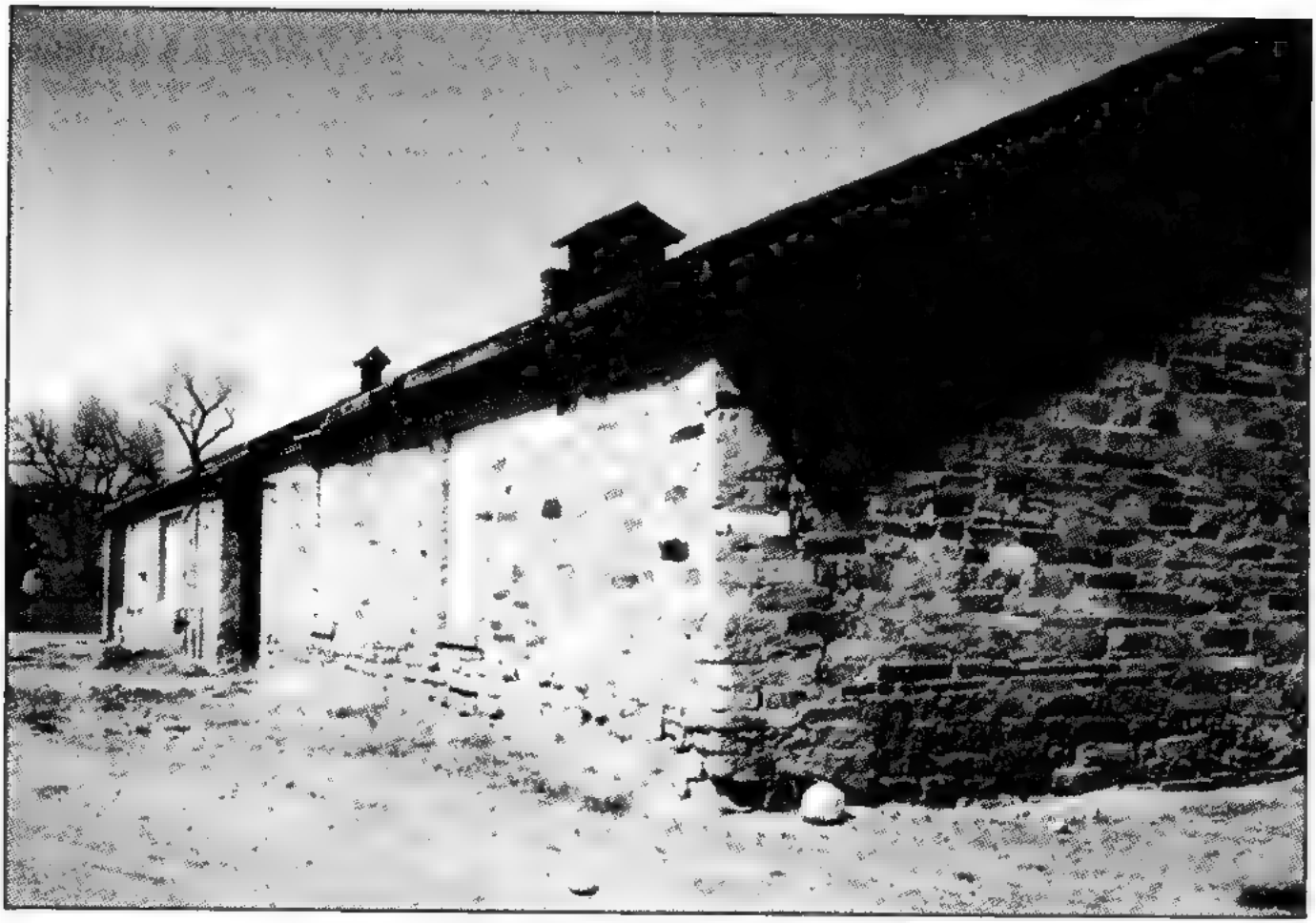

Existing stables at Fort Washakie, Wyoming. It was at Fort Washakie that the Pushroot Rangers were formed to protect settlers in the absence of regular troops. *Courtesy the author*

Original settlement at the present-day site of Lander, Wyoming, consisted of a small military post established in June 1869, first known as Camp Augur, a sub-post of Fort Bridger, and later renamed Camp Brown. When the post was moved fifteen miles northwest to the Little Wind River in 1871, a few settlers moved in around the abandoned buildings and took up residence. These settlers grew potatoes and truck gardens of vegetables to sell to the gold mining camps some thirty miles south on South Pass. Hence the name, Pushroot, which noted that the vegetables and grains grew well in this nearly mile-high valley. Pushroot became Lander when the post office was established in March 1875. This name was in honor of General Frederick West Lander, who helped survey a cutoff of the Oregon Trail in the vicinity in 1857-58.

Indian raids had been a problem for the gold mining communities of South Pass City, Atlantic City, and Miner's Delight, established on South Pass in 1867. While the Washakie band of the Eastern Shoshones were peaceful and cooperative with the white settlers in 1868, their enemies, the Sioux and Arapahoes, were not. The location of the Shoshones in the rich grounds of the Wind River country was only an added bonus to the raiding Sioux and Arapahoes. Numerous gold miners and settlers had been killed over the years. In July 1873, an elderly Pushroot resident and her niece were killed by these renegades. There was good reason for the townsfolk to be jumpy.

Predecessors to the Rangers may have formed as early as April 1875, when the somewhat askew "Battle of Cripes Butte" took place. Robert Hall, first a telegra

pher at Camp Stambaugh, a military post situated between Atlantic City and Miner's Delight, and later a Lyons Valley rancher wrote the story of the "Battle" in 1935.

Hall noted that in the spring of 1875 the grass was getting green and spring had arrived, along with a few unexpected Indians. A game of poker was coming to a crescendo at Jack Parkin's saloon. The card players' horses were put in the stable nearby, fed, watered, and the door was locked with a chain.

The game went on most of the night. When the gamblers decided to head home and face their wives after being gone all night, they discovered their horses gone. The eye through the log where the chain had been threaded had been cut out, the door opened, and their four-legged transportation had disappeared.

Captain William C. Bangs to Territorial Governor John M. Thayer

Carbon [Wyoming] July 11, 1876
To His Excellency John M. Thayer
Governor Wyoming Terry. Cheyenne, Wyoming

Sir:

I have the honor to hand you herewith a copy of the muster roll of a militia company organized here on the 9 day of July 1876 and under the officers whose names appear in the margin.

The object in view is to effect an organization which can be relied upon for home protection in case of Indian invasion, and we do all respectfully and most earnestly request that a sufficient number of arms be forwarded as soon as possible in order that we may be prepared for any emergency.

If the proper bonds and other papers are filled out and forwarded to me, I will have them signed by responsible parties known to you and returned without delay.

Hoping not to appear importunate in this matter I would again most earnestly request that we be furnished with arms as soon as possible as many of our citizens are becoming greatly alarmed at the threatening attitude of the Indians and I deem it quite expedient that we be prepared for the advent of hostile parties into this region at any time; the more so as this is one of their noted crossing places.

Hoping that this may receive your favorable attention, I have the honor to remain

Very respectfully
Your obedient servant

William C. Bangs
Capt.

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Pushroot Ranger Captain Billy O'Neal was notified, a war counsel called, and the Rangers were summoned. Volunteers Tom O'Neal, Joe Cornett, A. "Pap" Conant, Harry Burk, Hank Garlitz, Doc "By Cripes" Curry, Frank E'Coffey, and Jim Baldwin showed up to answer the alarm.

The trail of the erstwhile horse thieves and horses stretched along the north bank of the Popo Agie River. The raiding party had crossed at the future site of Arapahoe, Wyoming, and then southeast to the Butler Crossing of Beaver Creek, east to Alkali Butte, then crossing Conant Creek at what was known as Buck Camp.

The trail headed directly for a large clay butte, later to be christened "Cripes Butte."

As the Rangers rode around the bend at the head of a gulch they came upon the stolen horses. Captain O'Neal assigned Doc Curry and Frank E'Coffey to stay with the herd while the rest searched further. The Indian camp was around the next gulch. The Indians spotted the Rangers immediately and opened fire. Pap Conant received the first serious wound, a gunshot to the side.

Harry Burk returned fire from the right, forcing the Indians to cover. One Indian jumped on his horse, grabbed a robe, and started yelling and waving it to scare the horse herd. Doc Curry and E'Coffey were firing at the Indians,

but were not hitting anything. Curry's gun jammed, giving an Indian the chance to escape with the horses.

After a brief powwow, the Rangers decided to abandon any pursuit. Besides, Contant was in bad shape. Someone needed to return to Lander for a wagon to haul the wounded man, so the boys decided to just head home. The horses were never recovered.

The Rangers teased Doc Curry considerably about letting one lone Indian take the horses. Doc replied, "By cripes, it was frightening. You see the devils with horses, what significance is a man's life agin a cayuse? By cripes, t'was frightening!"

And so the butte, somewhere in the badlands south of Riverton, Wyoming, was christened "Cripes Butte." Doc Curry had been immortalized.

The Pushroot Rangers never left any more tales of bravado to be remembered—except that they served as the forerunner to the Wyoming National Guard. Known to the world as the boys who popularized the battle cry "Powder River, Let 'Er Buck," the Wyoming National Guard found *their* fame during World War I.

Jean Mathisen has been writing for *True West* since 1985. The author of over 420 articles, she currently resides in Riverton, Wyoming.

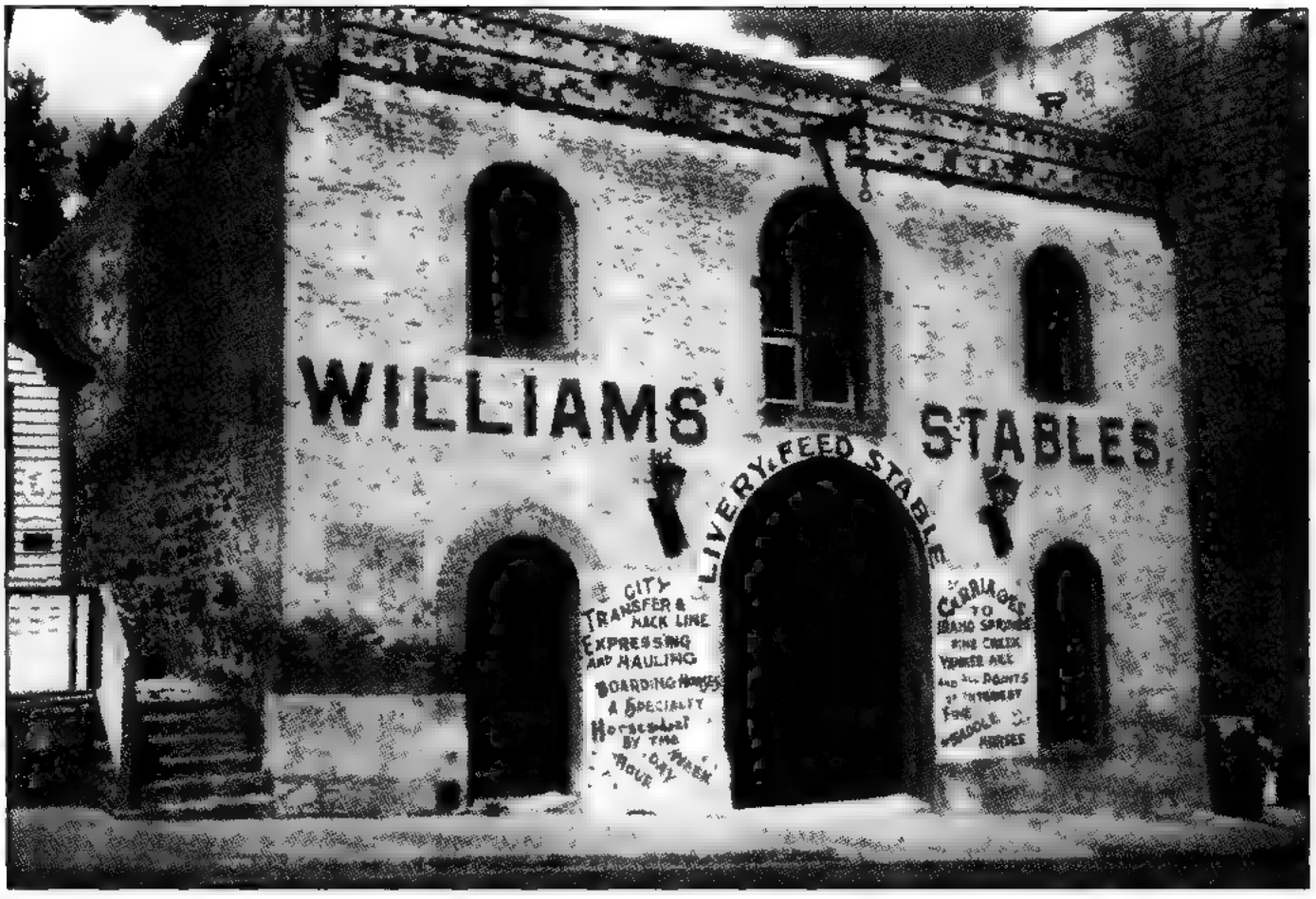
The Ranger's Command

Enlistment was for a period of two years at Pushroot, Wyoming Territory

Captain William O'Neal

Second Lieutenant Hiram Mealman
Sergeant P.P. Dickinson
Sergeant Phillip L. Morley
Sergeant John "By Cripes" Curry
Sergeant Ed Hancock
Sergeant John Grant
Sergeant R.C. Anderson
Corporal John McCollum
Corporal B. Frank Lowe
Corporal Geo. F. Stringfield
Corporal John Riley Corp
Blacksmith M.W. Dollard
Blacksmith M. Sheridan
Saddler Frank E'Coffey
Private Peter Anderson
Private J.B. Cooke
Private J. Conroy
Private L.B. Chapman
Private W.A. Frederick
Private Orville Groteau
Private W.F. Haynes
Private Edmo LeClaire
Private Lewis LeClaire
Private William Lap
Private William H. Lester
Private Mose Lamoreaux
Private Henry McQuaide
Private Peter Olson
Private Peter Quinn
Private T.W. Quinn
Private H. Reynolds
Private Ed St. John
Private B.F. Sortain
Private R.D. Simms
Private William Thompson
Private John Tomsen
Private Thomas Williams
Private C.C. Williams
Private B.F. Ward
Private J.I. Patten

This blockhouse by the Wind River Agency was built by settlers in 1869 to provide protection from Indian attack along the Wind River Valley. *Courtesy the author*



MURDER

Everything about Cornish immigrant Dick Williams was larger than life. He won boxing and wrestling matches against all contenders. His race horses were the fastest in the area. His wife bore thirteen children. Combining his and his oldest son's terms, the Williamses wore the Gilpin County, Colorado, sheriff's badge for thirty-two years. In typical Williams fashion, Dick's murder was the most dramatic event in Central City in a century.

When John Gregory discovered gold in 1859 near present-day Central City, Colorado, prospectors flocked to the mountain gulches nearby. Placer mining in the streams reaped a good living for a few years, but the surface gold was soon depleted. The ore below the surface in these Rocky Mountains was difficult to separate from the surrounding granite, and the call went out for the best miners in the world—the Cornish, who had been mining tin in Cornwall for centuries. Cornish miners poured into the Central City area from both Cornwall and American mining towns in Wisconsin and Michigan.

Richard Broad Williams, "Dick" to everyone who knew him, was born in Tavistock, Devon, England on December 10, 1847. When he was six years old, the family emigrated to the northern Michigan copper mining town of Eagle River. At twenty-one he first saw the Rocky Mountain mining camps when he accompanied his father on a visit. They soon returned to Michigan, but in 1870 Dick moved to Nevada City, Colorado Territory, one mile above Central City. His younger brother John quickly followed. They

Opposite page:
Williams Stables in Central City, built in 1876 for the guests of the Teller House & purchased in 1880 by Dick Williams. *Author's photo.*

Gilpin County, Colorado, Sheriff Richard Broad Williams. *Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.*

OF A PIONEER SHERIFF

By Linda Jones

both lived in the boardinghouse of John Bartle, and like him, they worked in the surrounding mines.

John Bartle was also Cornish and had married Elizabeth Bartle in Cornwall in 1843. They emigrated first to Dodgeville, Wisconsin, where their daughter, Elizabeth "Libbie" Jane was born in 1851, then to Eagle Harbor. In 1868 they finally settled in Nevada City. Seventeen-year-old Libbie stayed in Wisconsin with her husband, John Benney. By October 1869, both John and their infant daughter had died, and the widowed Libbie moved to Colorado Territory with her baby son.

On December 25, 1870, Dick and Libbie were married in the Bartle boardinghouse. Dick would be the center of Libbie's world for the next quarter-century. Certainly, life was never dull when Dick was around.

The story of the Cornish in Gilpin County is almost the story of the county, as half of the population and most of the mining personnel in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were Cornish. When Dick arrived in 1870 there were about 200 Cornishmen in Gilpin County; by 1914, 5,000 Cornish had come directly from Cornwall to Gilpin County. These "Cousin Jacks" and "Cousin Jennies," as Americans labeled them, brought their unique customs and superstitions with them. They had a fondness for salt cod, beer, pasties, and saffron cake. They worked hard, when not socializing in saloons, playing cards, and singing in principally Methodist choirs. They also brought to America their numerous superstitions, including mischievous little mine-dwellers, the Tommyknockers. These small elf-like creatures saved many miners by rapping on mine walls

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to warn of an impending collapse. They also supposedly played tricks on the miners, such as moving their tools during the night.

Dick excelled in both wrestling and boxing. Because of his fame in these sports, he was often chosen to referee prize fights and matches. His oldest son, Oscar, particularly relished the story of his father in one Cornish wrestling tournament in Central City. After two days of wrestling, only Dick and Durham Ivey were left. After another hour of wrestling, Dick threw Ivey and won the championship and purse. Dick later said Ivey was the best wrestler he'd ever met and could be the best Cornish wrestler in the country if he had the will to win. When a Cornish wrestler arrived from Butte, Montana, a match was arranged between the stranger and Ivey. Dick wrote friends in Butte and learned the stranger was Montana's best. The day before the match three people arrived from Butte, placing bets on the match. Dick backed Ivey with $500, then called at the Ivey home, like the good friend he was. Ivey thought Dick came to offer pointers on the match, but Dick replied, "No, Durham, no one can give you any pointers about wrestling. You are the best Cornish wrestler in the country. What I did come for was to tell you that if you don't win that match tomorrow, I'm going to beat the living hell out of you." Ivey won, believing Dick would do just what he had threatened.

Another account of Dick's strength came from a Michigan lumberjack named Albert Boulter. Albert weighed 200 pounds and had worked as a bouncer in a lumber camp. In "The Richest Square Mile on Earth," as Central City was known, Boulter heard over and over about the fistic ability of Dick Williams. After sampling some of Central City's saloons for courage, Boulter challenged Dick to a fight. Dick tried to reason with the large man, but Boulter was belligerent to the point., A ring was roped off at the back of Williams' Stables. With one punch, Dick knocked Boulter out for several minutes, then picked him up and took him across the street to the Teller House Bar for a drink.

Dick's love for horse-racing ran deep, and he received several mentions in the Denver press with his winning mounts. For two years, he even left his beloved Gilpin County and lived in Denver to make his living buying and selling horses. The Central City *Register Call* reported that a bronco he was breaking threw him three times, but surprisingly, the sheriff eventually conquered the beast.

The first tragedy in the Williams family occurred in 1877, as a result of forces set in motion in the old country in the 1840s. During that time the Cornish tin miners had protested the long hours and poor wages and appealed to members of the House of Commons for remedial legislation. The mine owners retaliated by importing Irish labor to work the tin mines. Naturally, the Cornish miners were resentful and the Irish replacements began suffering many "accidents" in the mines. Both sides seethed, and one night the Cornish removed all the Irish from their homes and burned the houses. Both public and official reaction forced the owners to stop importing Irish miners, but the hatred continued and was brought to America by both groups.

Nevadaville was populated by both Cornish and Irish, but they avoided each other, socializing in their own churches and saloons. However, the two groups shared Lake View, a half mile south of Central City, because it was the only lake in the area. They sailed, raced horses, enjoyed picnics, ice skated—and often fought.

This Month's Featured Author:

Name: Linda May Jones
Date, Place of Birth: 11.9.37
El Dorado, KS
Educational Background: Kansas & Colorado Universities
Occupation: Professional Tour Guide; President, Gilpin County Historical Society.
Hometown: Fairburn Mountain, CO
Family: Husband, Verl; two sons, one daughter; two dogs.
Publishing History: *Mile High Denver: A Guide to the Queen City of the Plains* (co-author, 1981); frequent contributor to the *Rocky Mountain News Gaming Guide* and the *Colorado Gambler*.
First *True West* Article: "You are reading it."
Current Research/Projects: Co-authoring an article on Baby Doe Tabor with Linda Wommack; writing a chapter for a compilation on the history of Gilpin County, Colorado.
Interests/Hobbies: Exploring old mines, horseback riding, collecting rare books about Colorado.
Favorite Western Movie: *High Noon*
Currently Reading: *The Two Lives of Baby Doe Tabor*, by Gordon Langley Hall.
Favorite Quote: "Good judgement comes from experience; experience comes from poor judgement."
Thoughts on Western History: "The people before us were such individuals, molded greatly by the physical landscapes they encountered, particularly in the West. They didn't live 'safely'....They ventured, explored, built, died. Now our landscapes, cities, our houses, even our populations are so homogenized."

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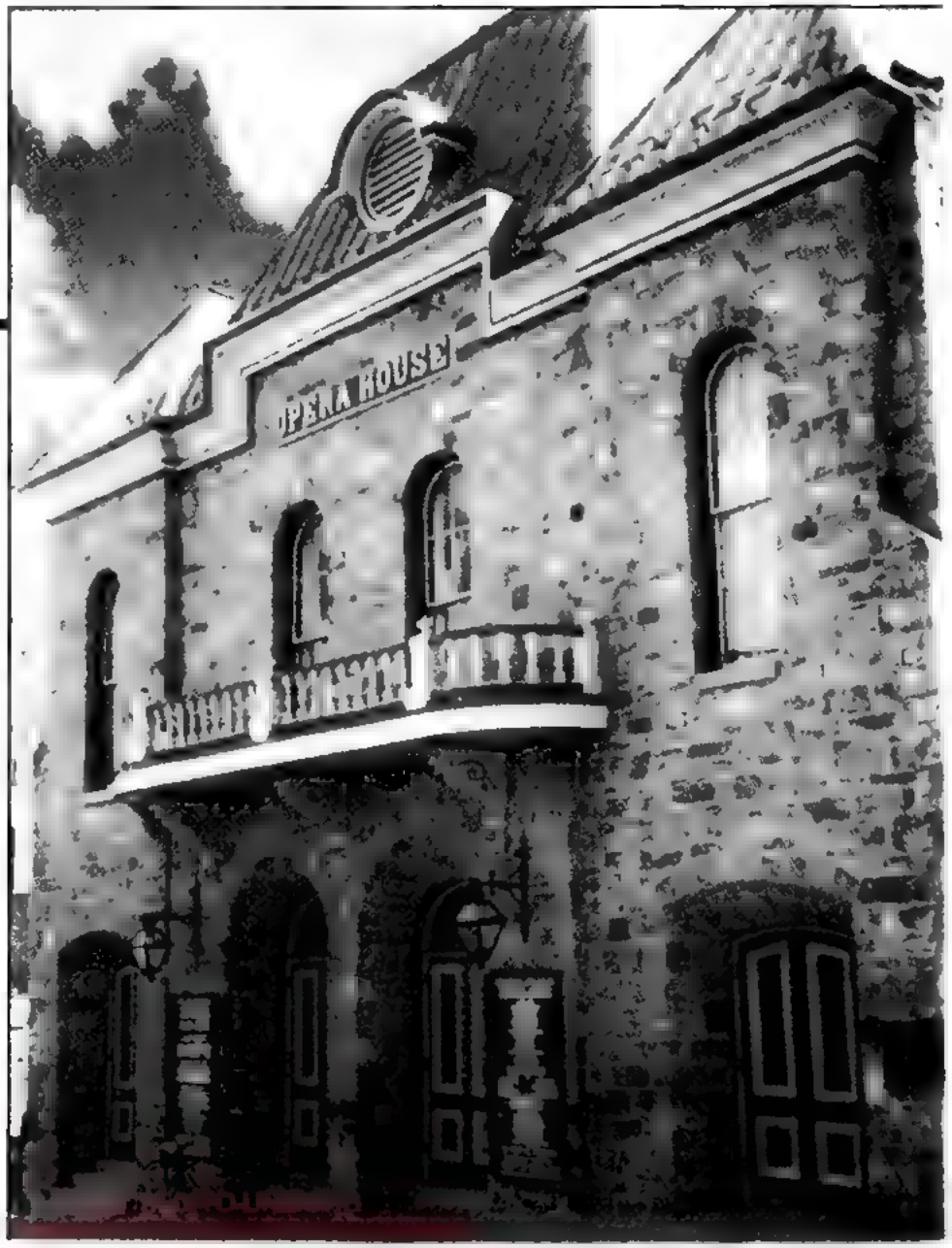
On August 19, 1877, an exciting horse race between John William's horse and Irishman Frank Harper's horse was too close to call. A fight started. John stayed out of it until an Irishman named Ryan drew his gun, then John ordered him to "put your gun up." Ryan didn't, the two grappled, and Ryan shot John in the stomach. John then wrestled him to the ground and beat him to death with a rock.

Friends took John to Dick's house in Nevadaville, where the wounded man lived just twenty-two hours. During that time, the Irish gathered in a saloon and convinced themselves they should lynch John. About midnight some twenty men approached the Williams' residence, which was on the second floor of John and Dick's stage business. Dick had blocked the stairway with an ore wagon and he stood in the wagon bed, armed with a rifle. He assured them he would kill anyone attempting to climb the stairs. The mob left quietly, and Dick earned the respect of both the Cornish and the Irish.

Dick inevitably ran for several offices, which he juggled with supporting his growing family. During his early married life, he earned a living by mining, then he began an ore-hauling business, and eventually he operated a meat market in Nevadaville. He was elected a Nevadaville town trustee for two terms, named a first lieutenant in the new National Guards headquartered in Central City, and elected foreman in the Nevadaville fire department (Nevada City was forced to change its name to Nevadaville to satisfy the post office). After he and his father-in-law established a stage line between Nevadaville and Central City, Dick was elected sheriff in 1879. In 1880 he was elected assistant chief of the Rough & Ready Hook & Ladder Fire Company in Central City. During his second term as sheriff, he wrestled professionally for a living. In 1883 and 1885 he was elected to two more terms as sheriff. Twice after he moved there, Dick was elected mayor of Central City and he was elected for one term as a Gilpin County commissioner.

His biggest contribution to the county was arguably the stables he established in 1891 when he returned to Central City from his two-year Denver residency. The Williams Stables would support the family as an operating livery into the 1920s. There were five other liveries in the area, but his was the largest and best stocked and offered the finest horses. Stables were of paramount economic importance in this high mountain town, built in a series of narrow gulches. No one had room to keep stock and nearly everyone rented their transportation. Every grain of gold that moved from mines to mills needed wagons, likewise every pound of coal, timber, and equipment that the mines and mills ordered from suppliers. Wagons carried goods from the merchants to the



Central City Opera House, built in 1878, where the funeral of Sheriff Williams was held. *Author's photo*

homes and furniture from house to house. Wagons carried the equipment produced by the foundries to the mines and picked up ash and trash. Residents used carriages to travel to the train depot, to races, and to cemeteries. Liveries routinely kept an extensive string of horses and saddles and vehicles of every kind—ore wagons, express wagons, coal wagons, carts, buggies, landaus, band wagons, and hearses.

Through both his businesses and elected offices, Dick had the opportunity to meet and charm everyone in Gilpin County. Stories about him still circulate, like the one about the new stranger in town in the late 1870s who won every footrace. The new racer beat the local boys convincingly. About the same time, a new miner had arrived in Georgetown and began winning every race, so a match was arranged in Idaho Springs, halfway between the two towns. The pot grew to several thousand dollars. Something alerted Dick and he went to watch the two newcomers train a few days prior to the race and realized the race was already fixed. The day of the race, just as the racers were approaching the starting line, he called the Nevadaville racer aside and told him he knew the race was fixed and that he had agreed to lose. Dick showed him his gun and said he would be at the finish line and if the local racer was not the first one over, he would kill him. The local prospect did more than win—he kept on going and was never seen in Gilpin County again.

In all his accomplishments, Dick had the loyal support of a remarkable woman. In addition to the two children from her first marriage (her son by her first husband died the year after she and Dick married), Libbie gave Dick eleven children, although only five lived to adulthood. Many of their children are buried in the Williams plot in the Bald Mountain Cemetery above Nevadaville. Libbie epitomized women of that era—strong and healthy, compassionate and neighborly.

A tangled chain of events having nothing to do with Dick led to his death. Samuel Covington, a quartz hauler from Nevadaville, had been sick and owed a $61 debt to a pharmacist which he had been unable to pay. Judge Seright in Central City had been given bills to collect against several parties; one of those judgments was lodged against Covington by the druggist. The judge had notified Covington of the unpaid bill by mail and had spoken with him about it when he saw him; when the debtor didn't pay Seright obtained judgment against him before another court and garnished his very first wages after returning to work. On April 15, 1896, Covington and his employer Antone Caesario had delivered a load of quartz to the mills in Black Hawk and were returning through Central City. Covington had just learned his paycheck would go to the pharmacist, and he was livid. He told Caesario he needed to visit Justice Arrighi's office to pay the judgment. Seright's office was adjoining, on the second floor over Goldman's Saloon, now the Golden Rose Casino. Covington walked right up to Seright, pulled his revolver and shoved it into the judge's chest. Seright pushed the gun aside and the bullet crashed through the floor into Goldman's card room. A client in the office rushed out for help while Seright began writing the receipt Covington demanded. Marshall Kelleher ran up the stairs and started to open the judge's door when

Opposite page:
Lodge & fire department members line up on Central City's Main Street for Sheriff Dick Williams' 1896 funeral. *Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.*

Tombstone of Dick Williams in Bald Mountain Cemetery, Gilpin County, Colorado. *Author's photo.*

Covington fired, striking Kelleher in the breast. Dick Williams had been working in his stables a half-block away and was rushing to assist after borrowing a revolver in the saloon. Just as Dick started up the stairs, Covington fired at him. Dick was hit in the chest and the bullet lodged near his opposite hip, but he managed to return fire. Covington ran down the stairs unscathed and headed west up Main Street. A cattleman from Middle Park was hastily deputized by Arrighi and given a Winchester rifle. He jumped into an express wagon and followed the fugitive. When Covington shot at him, and the large crowd following, with both revolvers, Lehman jumped from the wagon and shot Covington with his first bullet. The crowd captured Covington, laid him in the wagon, and took him back to the jail, where he soon died.

A special train was arranged to bring a doctor from Denver to attend to the injured men. He pronounced Keleher's wound as probably fatal and Dick's wound as not very serious. Yet Keleher recovered and Dick died four days later. At Dick's request, an autopsy was conducted on his remains to determine the exact damage done by the bullet. It had cut through his liver and the peritoneum of the intestines. The four doctors conducting the autopsy wondered how he lived that many days, concluding that only his indomitable will kept him going.

Dick's funeral was the only one ever held in the Central City Opera House. It was obvious the largest structure in town would be necessary to hold the crowd, and the Opera House seated 750. Even so, hundreds of mourners crowded about the four entrances to the Opera House. Several ministers and a priest participated in the service. The procession to Bald Mountain Cemetery near Nevadaville, almost three miles away, included 116 horse-drawn vehicles, twenty-seven horsemen, and representatives of all the lodges and fire departments, all on foot. Businesses in Central City closed the afternoon of the funeral, as did the Sleepy Hollow, Americus, Fiske, Central City, and other mines. Dick was forty-eight when he died, and his oldest child, Oscar, was twenty-three. His youngest child, Ruth, was only two.

Even in the 1940s, the old-timers could all remember exactly where they were and what they were doing when they heard Dick was shot. Libbie was in Denver with Oscar on that fateful day. Their eldest son was an adventurous boy who frequently broke bones and was in the capitol city having leg surgery. Oscar would follow in his father's footsteps, running the stables and eventually serving as sheriff of Gilpin County from 1922 through 1946.

By the oddest of coincidences, Libbie and Oscar both died on the same date as Dick, April 19; Libbie in 1949 and Oscar in 1957. They share the family plot in Bald Mountain with Gilpin County's most colorful resident and five other Williams children.

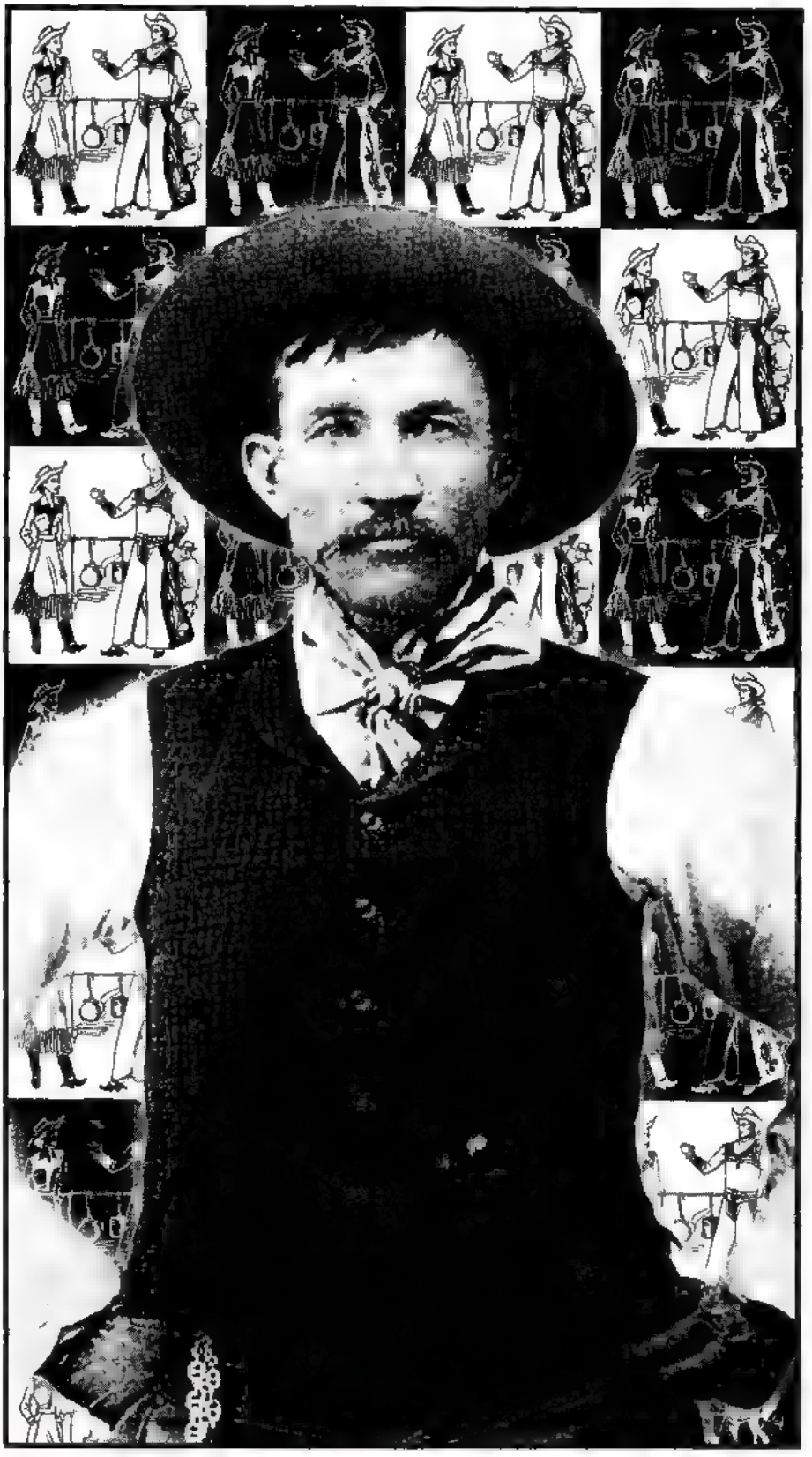
Separating Fact from Fancy in True Cowboy Fashion

Reviews

$10 Horse, $40 Saddle: Cowboy Clothing, Arms, Tools, and Horse Gear of the 1880s

By Don Rickey, Jr. Illustrated by Dale Crawford. (Bison Books, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588. Illustrated, bibliography, 135 pages. $19.95 Paper.)

★★★



Inspired by a line from the range ballad, "The Old Chisholm Trail," author Don Rickey interviewed several elderly cowboys in the 1950s to document working clothing and equipment of the 1880s. Rickey learned that the cowboy "look" of the last open range years was decidedly utilitarian, with little of the decoration and color that later distinguished western wear.

After introducing his subject, the author devotes short chapters to the hats, coats, shirts, bandannas, trousers, vests, slickers, chaps, boots, spurs, cuffs, and underwear worn by the cowboys. Turning to weapons and equipment, the reader is presented with equally brief chapters on the common knives, revolvers, rifles, ropes, quirts, bedrolls, warbags, saddles and tack, and branding irons.

Rickey points out that open range cowboys scorned Levi Strauss denim pants as "farmer garb." They preferred wool pants, usually worn without belts or galluses (which chaffed during long days in the saddle), or trousers left over from a suit of "town clothes." Discarded suits also provided vests and coats. Clothing generally was gray or black, with the exception of bandannas, which were cut from colorful cotton fabric.

Frontier women often knitted cotton or wool socks to barter at general stores. Cowboys would buy the socks from shopkeepers or from "huckster

wagons," mobile general stores that traveled to isolated cow camps. Spare socks and an extra shirt, along with a few personal items, were kept in a cowboy's warbag, almost always a canvas, two-bushel grain sack.

Early-day cowboys often spent more money on revolver cartridges than clothing. To keep costs down, many reloaded used cartridges. Working cowboys rarely carried saddle guns, because they got in the way; some ranchers did not permit their riders to carry rifles while on duty. If a cowboy owned a saddle gun, it was generally a Winchester 1873 carbine, utilizing a 44-40 cartridge that was compliant with the .44 Colt revolver.

A common source of cowboy gear was the army. Cowboys frequently bought their wool pants, winter coats, and extra gear from soldiers. The underpaid troopers were glad to sell clothing and equipment that could be easily replaced from the quartermaster warehouse

The strong appeal of this authentic book is artfully stated by the author in his Introduction: "Perhaps our intense interest in the cowboy of the 1880's is akin to homesickness for a place we've never been and never was, and an image of ourselves as we wish we were." *Bill O'Neal.*

America's National Historic Trails

By Kathleen Ann Cordes. Photographs by Jane Lammers. (University of Oklahoma Press, 4100 28th Ave. NW, Norman, OK 73069. Eighty photographs, 13 maps, 370 pages. $19.95 Paper.)

★★★★

Kathleen Ann Cordes knows the historic trails of the United States better than most folks. That's because she has gone up those paths—by foot, car, raft, kayak, plane, bike, skis, horseback, and even dogsled.

The result of the author's path-finding is a fact-filled guidebook brought to vivid color by Cordes' prose and the works of photographer Jane Lammers.

National historic trails were authorized in 1968 by the National Trails System Act. There are also national scenic trails, which Cordes plans to document in a publication scheduled for mid-2000.

Cordes and Lammers chronicle the Juan Batista de Anza, Lewis and Clark, Santa Fe, Trail of Tears, Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, Pony express, and Nez Perce trails of Western history, as well as the Overmountain Victory Trail of the civil rights movement in Alabama. They even followed the Iditarod National Historic Trail in Alaska, during the famous race from Anchorage to Nome.

As a guide, the book is more than complete. The administering agency, an address for information, the year established, approximate mileage, and the states involved are listed for each trail. Phone numbers and web sites are listed when available

Cordes then offers a brief historical overview of each trail, and a look at the trail today. Points of interest are listed state-by-state. Naturally, there is also a map of each trail.

Despite a few layout problems (some type is to small to read), *America's National Historic Trails* is a worthy traveling companion whether you plan to walk, bike, ski, or drive over these routes. *Johnny D. Boggs.*

Comanches in the New West, 1895-1908

By Stanley Noyes. (University of Texas Press. Illustrated, bibliography, 113 pages. $24.95 Cloth.)

★★★

A few years ago, Stanley Noyes wrote a well-received account of the early history of the tribe in *Los Comanches*. Now, he picks up the story at the end of the nineteenth century, when these fine horsemen and warriors were living quietly on the reservation.

The book is really a sort of album of historic photos, 128 black and white images which Noyes has carefully captioned. The author's introduction adds to the Comanches' history, in brief, after their treaty of 1867. The focus is on the reservation years when Chief Quanah Parker pretty much held the tribe and its traditions together at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

The discovery of the photos is a story in itself. Someone sent a print of one of the images to Texas novelist Larry McMurtry (who contributes a foreword) for Christmas. McMurtry ended up buying the whole collection of glassplate negatives, allowing Noyes to research and describe each one. The photographers were little-known in their day, and remain so today. The were Alice Snearly, and her brother-in-law, Lon Kelly, who had studios in Henrietta, Texas, and Duncan, Oklahoma. As this interesting volume attests, they were excellent camera artists. *Richard Dillon.*

Lucien Maxwell: Villain or Visionary

By Harriet Freiberger. (Sunstone Press, PO Box 2321, Santa Fe, NM 87504. Maps, line drawings, photos, notes, 160 pages. $14.95 Paper.)

★★★★

Lucien B. Maxwell was born and grew up in Illinois, but had arrived in New Mexico by 1835. There he traded with the Plains Indians, hired on as a hunter for John C. Frémont, and along the way became great friends with frontiersman Kit Carson. Throughout his lifetime, Maxwell was a businessman, trapper, trader, scout, Indian fighter, politician, mountain man, cattle driver, and landowner. He is best known for the latter.

Through the efforts of his father-in-law, Judge Carlos Beaubien, Maxwell came into possession of nearly two million acres of land in northeastern New Mexico. Historically it became the Maxwell Land Grant, and by 1854 centered around Cimarron.

Maxwell lived in baronial style, grazing thousands of sheep, cattle, and horses on his land, in the process providing employment to hundreds of people, many of them Indians.

The land grant proved to be a controversial subject. As Maxwell consistently strengthened his hold on the land, various lawsuits, charges, countercharges, political corruption, and violence flared.

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Finally, in 1878, weary of constantly fighting challenges to his domain, Maxwell sold out to various capitalists. He became a millionaire at a time when the word had hardly been coined. He subsequently dabbled in banking, railroading, and other enterprises, but wearied of the process and moved to Fort Sumner, New Mexico, and became a rancher.

Lucien Maxwell died at Fort Sumner in 1875, and is buried there. For those who follow outlaw lore, his son Pete became a leader in the area, and is best known for the fact that Sheriff Pat Garrett shot and killed Billy the Kid in the darkness of Maxwell's bedroom on a warm July night in 1881.

Harriet Freiberger has written an excellent biography of one of the most interesting, controversial characters in the history of the American Southwest. Highly recommended. *Leon Metz.*

Army Life on the Pacific

By Lawrence Kip. (Ye Galleon Press, Box 287, Fairfield, WA 99012. Index. 186 pages. $22.50 Cloth.)

★★★★

Most accounts of our Indian wars are written long after the fact by professors or other historians in the calm and safety of book-lined dens. Rare are first-hand accounts by participants, like this one. The narrative of Kip, a Second Lieutenant in the Third Artillery, is well-written; very interesting. It is in two parts, one on the 1855 peace pow-wow of Walla Walla and the other on the 1858 campaign that followed that treaty's abrogation by an alliance of tribes—the Spokanes, Coeur d'Alenes and Yakimas. Kip and his cannoneers, pressed into service as infantrymen for a sixty-day expedition, marched on foot over 760 miles of Washington Territory.

Colonel George Wright's campaign was to revenge a defeat of Colonel Edward Steptoe near Spokane. Troops were brought from as far away as Fort Yuma. Wright set out with a mix of dragoons, infantry,

artillerymen, Mexican muleteers, and Nez Perce Indian scouts. So overconfident were the hostiles after beating Steptoe that they met the Army in two pitched battles instead of using their customary guerrilla tactics of hit-and-run skirmishes. Although the Indians were brave enough and chose both battlefields of the war, Four Lakes and the Spokane Plain, Wright thrashed them badly.

The victory was not just because of the discipline and spirit of his troops. There were splendid attacks by his infantry and converted artillerymen and a (rare!) saber charge by two squadrons of the First Dragoons. As few rounds of howitzer fire also helped. But the "secret weapon" of the Army was simply a rifle battalion. The hostiles, with only old Hudson's Bay Company trade muskets to back up their bows and arrows and lances, were no match for soldiers armed with longer-range rifles. Wright did not have even one man killed in the entire campaign, including both battles, and only one man wounded. Many Indians were killed or wounded.

Wright is little-known because he died in a California shipwreck before he could build on his reputation in the Civil War. He was a skilled—and ruthless—Indian fighter. In addition to beating his enemies, he captured their entire remount herd of 900 horses. After picking out the best 200 animals, he shot the other 700 so that the Indians could not stampede and recover their horses later. (Colonel Ranald Mackenzie adopted the same measure, later, in his Palo Duro campaign in Texas.) Then, after taking the surrender of the hostiles, Kip's commanding officer hanged a number of warriors accused of murder.

What a bargain is this book! A copy of the very rare 1859 original edition recently came on the market at $450. *Richard H. Dillon.*

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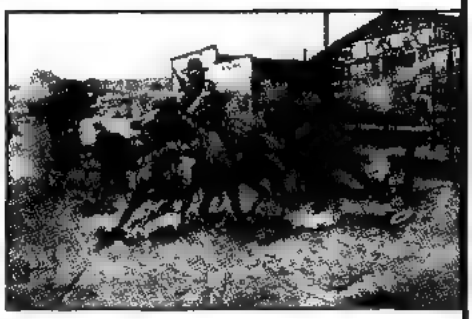

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WILD WILD SEX

By Norma Jean Almodovar

The Dumas Revisited

All photos courtesy the Dumas Brothel Museum

Three unidentified employees, posing for a rare photo in a Dumas crib.

Whores have always been a hardy breed. During the frigid winters of 1890 Butte, Montana, this hardiness separated the pros from the amateurs. Butte was a rugged and cold place for anyone, and a really lousy place for a woman to earn a living. The prostitutes working in Butte's high-class bordellos were the exception.

While the bitter cold discouraged most commercial trade in "the most wide open town in the West," Butte's infamous red light district thrived twenty-four hours a day.

As money flowed from the copper veins overlooking the town, called the "richest hill on earth," the vices of the men who owned and worked the mines were not given short shrift. Palaces of pleasure, dance halls, and saloons were constructed as quickly as the gallows frames that began dotting the landscape.

Prostitution was perfectly legal in 1890 Montana, so when French Canadian brothers Joseph and Arthur Nadeau designed a building to be used solely as a brothel, they did not fear the wrath of the community or local law enforcement. Rather, the community saw the need for the red light district and encouraged its growth. It was thought by the "good women" of Butte that the brothels would actually protect them from the unwanted attention of the thousands of single, itinerant cowboys and miners who drifted through Butte.

Joseph Nadeau arrived in the United States in 1868, and in 1878, married Delia, also a French Canadian. They migrated to Butte in 1879. In 1890, Joseph and his brother Arthur built the Dumas Brothel as a sound business investment. The ownership of the Dumas was listed in Delia's name.

It is not known how the Dumas acquired its name, although amateur historians have speculated that Delia Nadeau may have had relatives with that surname in Canada. It is quite possible, but not verifiable, that Delia was the first madam at the Dumas. Parlor houses then, as now, tended to fare better with female management. Many brothels were actually owned or operated by men, but women running the place made the clientele and employees more comfortable.

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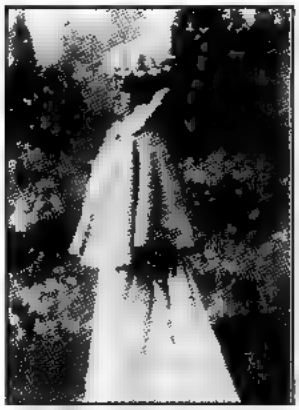
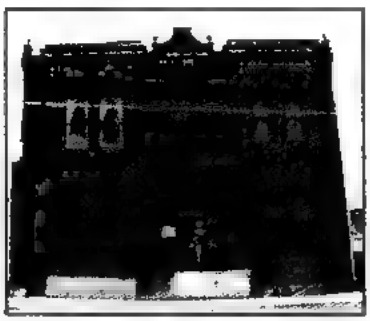
Butte miners at work.



Unidentified Dumas whore.

Delia Nadeau was listed as owner of the Dumas in 1890, and porbably served as the first Madam.



The Dumas Brothel today. The building now houses a museum.

By 1922 the Nadeaus had built or acquired more buildings in the red light district than any other Butte property owners. Their real estate empire included the Copper Block, a large brick saloon and hotel which provided living quarters for area prostitutes, gamblers, and others. Local lore claims that the Copper Block, built in 1892, was never used as a brothel, but that is highly unlikely. A building of its size, in the heart of the red light district, would seem to be a waste if not used, at least in part, as a bordello.

The Copper Block, on the corner of Galena and Wyoming streets, just north and east of the Dumas, was demolished in the early 1990s. In its place is a parking lot, surrounded by sheet-metal silhouetted figures of the former denizens of "Venus Alley." The ghostly silhouettes of cowboys and whores were designed by Butte high school students as an art class project. A nearby placard recognizes the significant contribution to the community made by the women of the red light district.

The Dumas is unique in more ways than one. Through its longevity, from 1890 to 1982, the many levels of prostitution in are still evident, from the highest to the lowest. The nearly one hundred years of continuous operation left behind a priceless treasure of social and sexual history within the walls of the Dumas.

There were much grander parlor houses than the two-story red brick sporting house erected at 45 East Mercury Street. The six city block area in and around Mercury, Wyoming, and Galena Streets ultimately boasted a number of fancy establishments. With their ornate stained glass windows and Tiffany Lamps, circular mahogany stairways and immense dance halls, the Dumas paled in comparison to her more elegant sisters.

Not that the Dumas lacked the finest amenities available at the time. With its elaborately decorated metal cornice and double bay windows, the Dumas was the first of Butte's glamorous parlor houses to appear on Mercury Street in 1890.

Like her elegant sisters, the Windsor and the Victoria, the Dumas was filled with expensive and exotic paintings and red velvet draperies, satin covered

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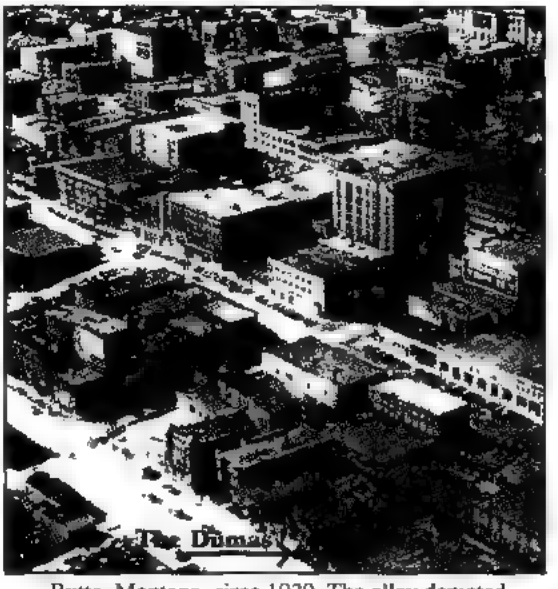
sofas and chairs, gilded mirrors, and brass beds with dainty silk coverlets. To compete with the other fancy parlor houses on Mercury Street, the Dumas required the most lavish bordello accouterments, just like their Eastern and European counterparts. The massive Dumas offered a variety of options. Today, the empty, silent rooms and hallways offer a unique museum experience to visitors interested in a darkened corner of history.

The basement contains smaller, windowless rooms called cribs. Originally, a stairway led downstairs from the front sidewalk. The prostitutes who worked in the basement cribs were perhaps a little older and often from racial minority groups, which may have made them less desirable to the wealthy clients who patronized the brothel's upper floors.



Butte, Montana, circa 1929. The alley depicted behind the Dumas was a bustling red light district. Called "Venus Alley," the narrow passage was honeycombed with cribs and entrances to parlor houses.

The main floor boasts a parlor on the west side of the building, connected by massive sliding doors, which could be opened to create an area for parties and other social activities, and closed again to regain the individual rooms. The space created when the doors were opened all at once was large enough to function as a formal ballroom, complete with orchestra, band, or a grand piano as the occasion required.

There were servants' quarters at the back end of the first floor, next to the kitchen, where a full-time cook also resided. A saloon filled the rooms on the east side of the building, making the Dumas a one-stop pleasure palace.

The top floor contains several large rooms as well as suites, and features an open balcony with skylight, the main source of lighting during the day. There is also a communal bathroom with an oversized tub, undoubtedly used by more than one person at a time! The madam's suite was located on the top floor, presumably where she could oversee the activities of her girls. There were servants to answer the door and usher in customers when the madam retired to her room.

On all levels of the Dumas, the windows to the "working" rooms were on the inside of the building, so that a customer could walk down the corridor and literally "window shop." If a woman was busy, her window shade would be drawn; if she was available, she would sit in her window, looking seductive.

During its first few years of operation, the Dumas employed only about four prostitutes. This was, after all, a high-class place. Four beautiful young women could bring in all the business the brothel needed to thrive and support a staff of servants and a cook.

By 1913, business was so good that it was necessary to add a one story annex containing eight cribs on the rear of the Dumas. In 1916, the price of copper rose, with a corresponding pay raise to the 14,000 miners. The extra $6,000 in the local economy meant more business for the entire red light district, including the Dumas. The parlor and saloon areas were partitioned into separate, smaller rooms, bringing the total number of available working rooms to forty-three. Until around 1942, the Dumas used all forty-three of its rooms and during busy times, weekends and paydays, ran three shifts of girls. The mines worked "'round the clock," meaning there were three shifts of miners to service daily.

During the nearly one hundred years

This photo, found during the Dumas restoration, may be one of the Nadeau brothers, builders of the Dumas.

that the Dumas provided sexual services to the men of Butte, hundreds or perhaps thousands of women came from around the world to work therein. Their job was to provide a few brief moments of sexual pleasure, to offer an illusion, a temporary fantasy in the all too bleak world of a mining town. Miners lost their lives in underground explosions on a daily basis. The service the prostitutes provided was every bit as important to the economic development of the community as the mining itself.

No historically accurate film, documentary, or book of the Old West can be made without in some way portraying the whores and madams who lived hard and sometimes died hard alongside the men. Their existence is every bit as relevant to the chronicle of the frontier as the well-received and cherished cowboys and outlaws.

The gallows marking each mining site were built over a hundred years ago and still remain as silent memorials to the thousands of men who died beneath them. It would be impossible to mistake the hulking skeletal metal frames for anything but what they were. They cannot be "gutted out," sanitized, and used for another purpose, unlike the many hundreds of former brothels and cribs throughout the West.

At the end of the twentieth century, America's longest running house of prostitution is the last of these houses left in Butte's once thriving and enor-

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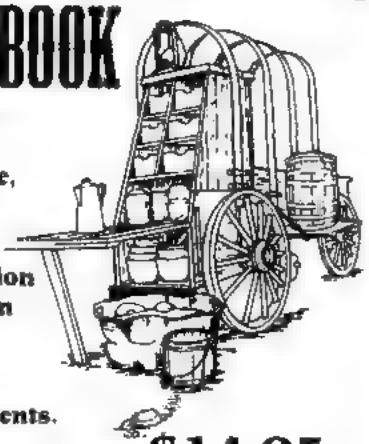

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Butte, Montana, in the 1890s was a desolate place, where men were eager for female comapnionship.

mous red light district. The Dumas is also the only remaining intact example of this type of "Victorian brothel architecture" anywhere in the United States. The building is very nearly unchanged from when it was built. Walking into the Dumas is like stepping through a portal into a lost century.

The women of the Dumas Brothel are long gone now and 45 East Mercury Street no longer offers illicit pleasures. It ceased operating as a house of prostitution in 1982 and now serves as a museum, filled with amazing artifacts from decades past.

Editor's Note: The Dumas Brothel was put on the National Register of Historic Places in the early 1970s, listed as an active bordello. The physical condition of the Dumas at present is such that it stands little chance of surviving many more of Butte's rough winters. Without immediate financial help, necessary restoration cannot take place. The roof has been patched beyond recognition. It must be replaced. The stairway is in imminent danger of collapsing, which would take the back and east side of the building with it. If the Dumas Brothel does not survive, an important part of our Western history will be lost forever. For more information on the Dumas Restoration Project, or to make a tax-free contribution, please call (406) 723-6128.

Norma Jean Almovodar is the best-selling author of *From Cop to Call Girl*, relating the story of her adventures on the streets as an Los Angeles policewoman, to her adventures between the sheets as a Beverly Hills escort. Almovodar is currently acting director of the Dumas Brothel Museum and Historical Center in Butte, Montana

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Wild Bill Hickok: Man & His Myth

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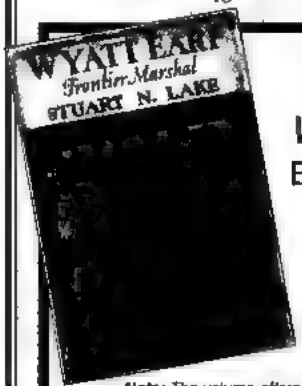

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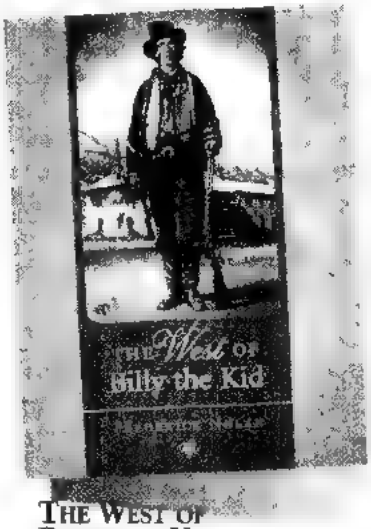

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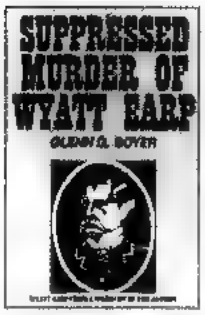

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By Glenn Boyer

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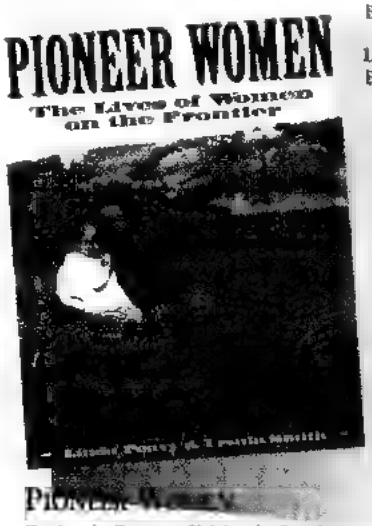

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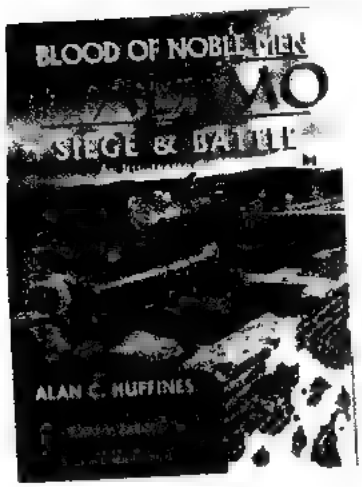

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A day-by-day chronology of the gripping story of the siege of the Alamo, *Blood of Noble Men* retells the participants accounts unembellished by myth. The author also annotates the first-hand testimonies to answer lingering questions. The book is superbly illustrated by Gary Zaboly, noted military artist and frequent contributor to *True West* magazine. 240p. 39 full-page illustrations. Eakin Press.

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A brilliant biography of the Kiowa chief who terrorized the western frontier but who fascinated the eastern press. Robinson deals with Satanta, as both legend and man, within the context of the Kiowa culture as it came face-to-face with the encroachments of western immigration. 254p. Statehouse Press.

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By Philip Rasch

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This volume takes an in-depth look at African American scouts and soldiers on the American frontier during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Bypassing the racial hostilities they endured—well covered by other books—the author examines military incidents involving black soldiers and desperadoes, as well as critical military engagements in which they made an important difference. 286p. Eakin Press.

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ASK THE MARSHALL

By Marshall Trimble

Q Is it true Tom Custer had tattoos? And if he did, what were they?—Steve Randolf, Helena, Montana

A Thomas Custer, who died with his brother George at Little Bighorn, did in fact have elaborate tattoos on one arm, including images of Our Goddess of Liberty, an American Flag, and his initials, T.W.C. In fact, these same tattoos were used to identify his body after the so-called Custer's Last Stand.

Q Who was the first actor to play Jesse James in the movies and what was the year?—Bobbie Cady, Cody Wyoming

A Incredible, but true, Jesse James, Jr. (not a true "Junior," his real name was Jesse Edward James) portrayed his father in the 1921 picture *Jesse James Under the Black Flag.*

Q Is it true Geronimo once rode on a Ferris Wheel?—Jayme Northrop, El Paso, Texas

A Hard to believe, but yes he did. The wily Apache prisoner of war was paid to attend the 1896 Chicago World's Fair and in between sessions of being on display, Geronimo and his guards took in the midway and the "Human Tiger" rode the mighty Ferris Wheel (it stood a whopping 150 feet in the air!).

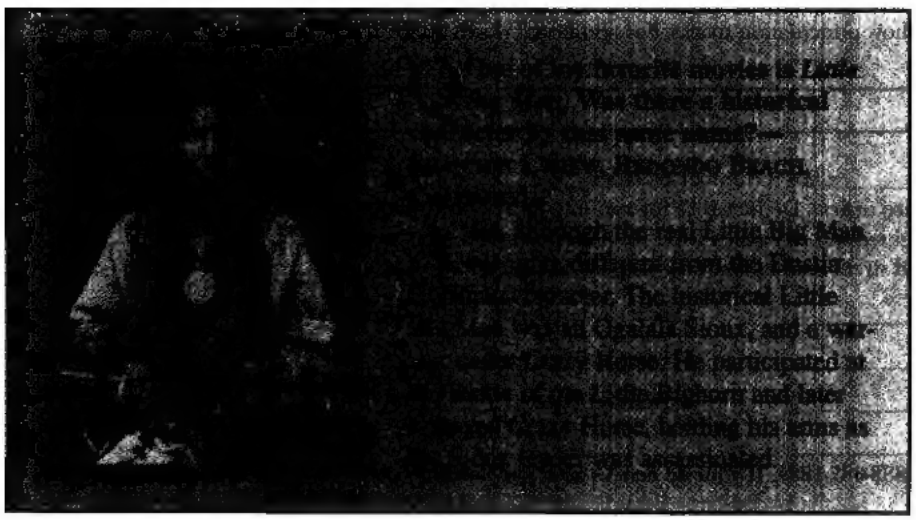
Q I've been having an argument with a friend of mine. He says the movie *Tombstone* is more accurate than the Kevin Costner movie *Wyatt Earp.* I thought Costner's Earp had more facts in it. So which movie was more accurate?—Lowell Landy, Buffalo Center, Iowa

A I assume you mean historically accurate. All things considered, both movies got a surprising number of details correct. For example, both films took on Wyatt's affair with Josie Marcus. And both attempted to deal with some of the more shady aspects of Earp's past, etc. The bad news is both movies were also full of Hollywood manure (the Vendetta ride in *Tombstone* where they were killing and hanging everyone in sight comes to mind). I would give a slight edge to *Wyatt Earp* simply because it covered more of Earp's life, but as for the emotional truth, I would give the nod to *Tombstone.*

Wyatt Earp (Kevin Costner) and Doc Holliday (Dennis Quaid) in *Wyatt Earp* (1994). *Warner Brothers*

Q Is it true Indians never attacked at night?—Squibe Nish, Peach Springs, Arizona

A Some Apaches reportedly didn't like to attack at night because of snakes, but most war parties and most tribes attacked whenever and wherever there was an advantage.



Marshall Trimble has taught Western History at the college level for twenty-seven years, and is Arizona's Official Historian. His books include *Arizona: A Cavacade of History, A Roadside History of Arizona,* and *Never Give A Heifer A Bum Steer.* A noted lecturer and musician, Trimble makes as many as 200 public appearances a year.

If you have a question, write: Ask the Marshall, PO Box 8008, Cave Creek, AZ 85327.

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